VIETNAM Courier

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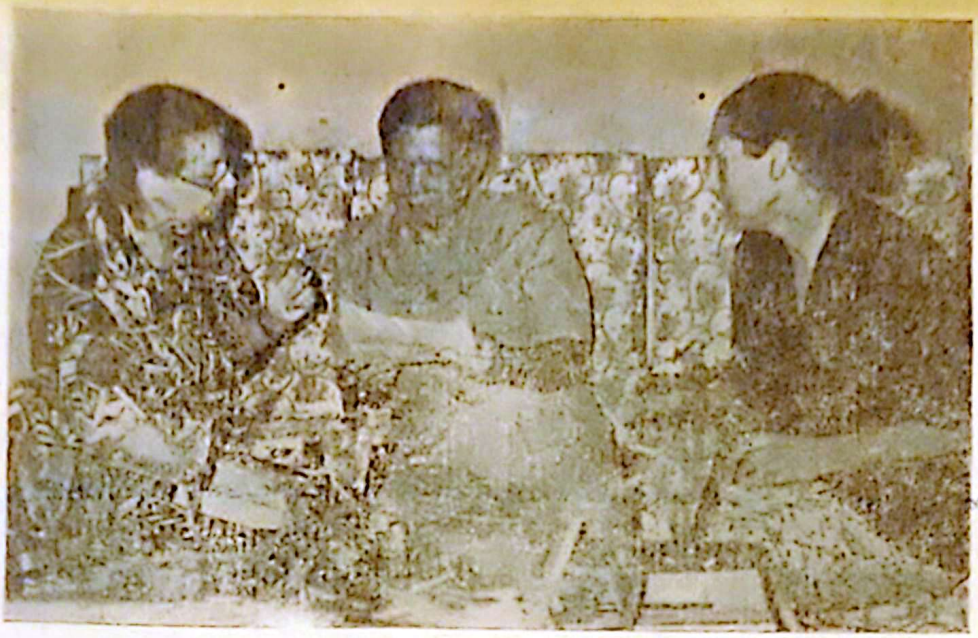
THE PARTY AND LITERATURE AND ARTS

DEMOCRATISATION OF THE PRESS

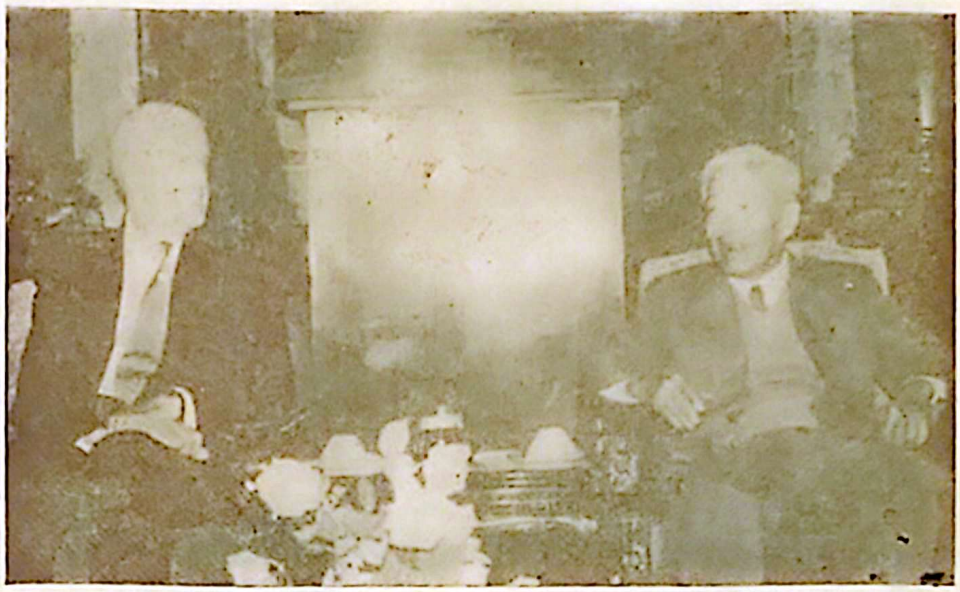
SPRING AND WEDDINGS IN VIETNAM

OUR GUESTS



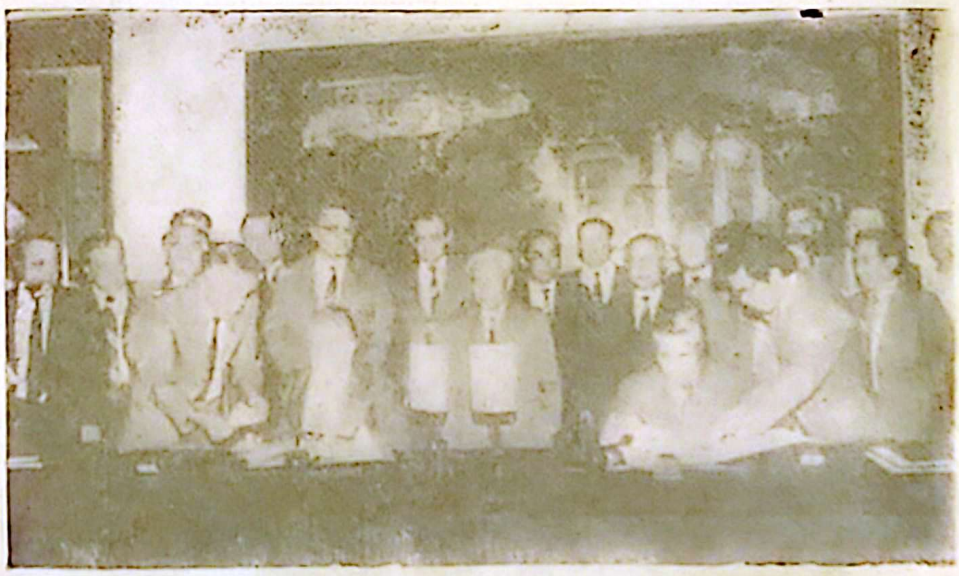
● *CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh receiving French journalists Marian Barbara and Madeleine Riffaud (right). (8 October 1987).*

Photo: XUAN LAM



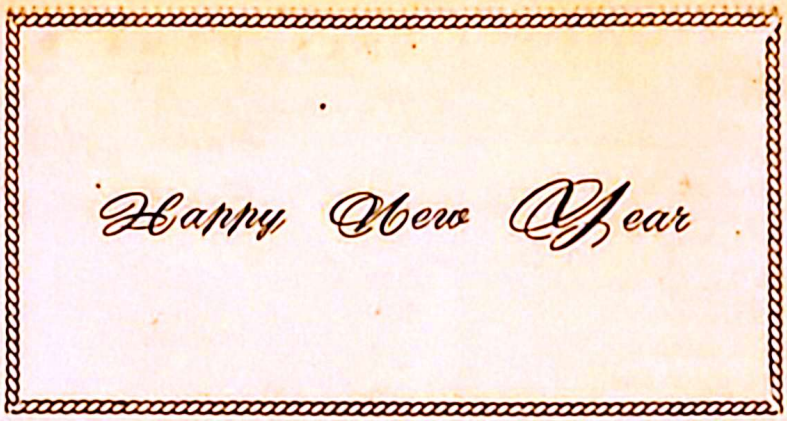
● *Chairman of the SRV Council of Ministers Pham Hung receiving A. Royler, coordinator of UNDP activities in Vietnam, at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi. (23 October 1987)*

Photo: MINH DAO



● *Signing of Vietnam — Soviet cooperation agreements at the Government Guest House in Hanoi. (29 October 1987)*

Photo: MINH DAO



THE POWER OF REASON

VU CAN

Here comes 1988. The New Year, as always, brings new hopes.

In fact the Vietnamese celebrate two New Years: that of the Western (Gregorian) calendar, introduced by the colonial regime and officialized by the revolutionary government as soon as it assumed power; and that of the luni-solar calendar, Tết, observed in the so-called sinicized Far East for many centuries. This traditional New Year falls usually in late January, early February. The Khmer's Chaul Chhnam Thmei and the Lao's Pi May come a little later, in April. Our neighbours, whose calendars are patterned on that of ancient India, are part of what historians call Indianized Asia.

It can be seen that the three Indochinese peoples show marked cultural differences although the three linguistic groups to which they belong respectively are all part of the family of Austro-Asiatic languages. They have, in any event, shared a common destiny since the dark days of colonialism. The protracted and arduous struggle jointly conducted for national emancipation, then for national defence and socialist construction, has united them in what they call a special alliance — friendship till death. They look forward to a common future, in both the short and long term. They all aspire to a better life, in peace, stability, dignity and cooperation. Aspirations that are common to all peoples.

In the world, the insane arms race is being stepped up. On the other hand its more and more flagrantly absurd character and the threat it brings of a suicidal nuclear war have, dialectically, provoked a serious awareness of what must be done before it is too late. People set about pondering over the problems of the nuclear and space age and looking for a new philosophical approach likely to lead to their solution. A hitherto unknown phenomenon appears: the five continents are swept by a powerful movement for peace and a nuclear-free world, in which more and more ordinary people and more and more governments participate. The "hawks" have seen their ranks divided. Dialogue, which had been thought impossible, has worked its way into international relations in spite of many obstacles — East-West relations, North-South relations, and especially those between the USA and the USSR. Although the new trend is still a long way from prevailing, it has helped to reduce tension and bring viewpoints closer together.

Against this backdrop the first efforts have been made for bridging the gap between the ASEAN and Indochinese countries, especially with regard to Kampuchea, the hot spot in the region. The situation has become stable in the People's Republic of Kampuchea which on 7 January last entered its tenth year of existence. Problems related to this country are ripe for a negotiated solution. Indonesia and Vietnam, as representatives of the two groups of countries, had begun talks which led to the Ho Chi Minh City communiqué of 29 July 1987. For its part, Phnom Penh, on

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Front Cover: A scene from the cheo opera "The Goddess of Mercy" (Gouache by BUI XUAN PHAI).

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Hanoi Art Exhibition 1987

Flowers, oil painting by NGUYEN HUU NGOC
Photo: Association of Literature and Art.

Every year an art exhibition has been organized by the Hanoi Association of Literature and Art to commemorate the liberation of the Capital on 10 October 1954.

This year were displayed at the exhibition 179 works (129 paintings and 50 sculptures) by 140 professionals and amateurs.

The main themes are related to Hanoi landscapes and people. Viewing them from many angles the artists depict the life of the city's people, their deportment, their distinctive traits, their habits and customs, as well as their environment.

The salient feature of this year's exhibition was the presentation of excellent works about suburban scenery. Silks were the favourite of female authors, who excel in the use of soft tones and the portrayal of gentle feelings.

Albeit they are only local art activities, Hanoi Art Exhibitions have been receiving the participation of veteran painters and sculptors like Luong Xuan Nhi, Hoang Tich Tru, Pham Van Don, Pham Viet Song, and others.

NGOC LAN

PANORAMA • PANORAMA

A VIETNAMESE ARTISTE AWARDED A SPECIAL PRIZE AT THE VILLA LOBOS GUITAR CONTEST

In August last an international guitar contest named after the famous Brazilian composer Villa Lobos was held in Hungary in the framework of the Eighth World Festival of Guitarists.

The participants coming from 30 countries, went through two rounds, in each of which they performed three works by Villa Lobos, plus one of their own choice in the second round.

Vietnamese guitarist Dang Ngoc Long was the only Asian contestant. Born in 1957, he was an outstanding disciple of the well-known Vietnamese guitarist Ta Tan. After graduating from the secondary-level guitar section of the Hanoi Conservatoire, he was sent to study at the Berlin Conservatoire under Professor Inge Stone. Although he was only a first-year student, the Berlin Conservatoire sent him to Hungary to compete in the above-mentioned contest.

In both rounds, Dang Ngoc Long displayed highly delicate and skilled technique. In the second round, he was warmly praised for his playing of "Mountains and Forests of the Central Highlands" composed by himself.

At the end of the contest, the jury awarded him a special prize. A Hungarian guitarist won the first prize, and two, from the German Democratic Republic, the second and third prizes.

QUOC HUNG

SECOND CONGRESS OF THE VIETNAM BUDDHIST CHURCH

A Congress was held in Hanoi on October 28 and 29, 1987, attended by more than 200 delegates, members of the Superior Council and the Central Executive Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Church and representatives of Buddhist monks, nuns and believers throughout the country, together with representatives of Vietnamese Buddhist organizations abroad, of Vietnamese Buddhists in France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The participants also included delegates of Buddhist believers in the Soviet Union, Laos and Kampuchea, and of the Asian Buddhist Centre for Peace.

Reviewing the activities of the Church in the last term of office of the Councils, the Congress pointed out the positive contributions by bonzes and faithful in national construction and defence, and stressed the role of the Vietnam Buddhist Church in promoting national union.

At the same time, it pointed out the shortcomings: manifestations of departmentalism, factionalism, misconceptions about the Church's activities, and separation of Buddhists from the national community had been noted among a number of bonzes and localities.

The Congress passed a Draft Amended Charter aimed at further strengthening the Church's organization, and an Outline Programme of activities for the new Executive Council.

It elected new members to the Superior Council, nominated a new Central Executive Council, headed by the Venerable Thich Tri Tinh and ordained 22 monks superior, 39 monks, 12 nuns superior and 28 nuns.

In a letter sent to the State Council of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and a message to monks, nuns and believers at home and abroad, the Congress re-affirmed its line of "Doctrine, Nation and Socialism", linking the Church's activities to the realities of the people's life and the country, encouraging monks, nuns and faithful to do their bit for the defence of peace and the building and defence of the homeland.

Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, sent a letter of greeting to the Congress. On 28 October 1987, he cordially received the participants at the Presidential Palace, on which occasion he reaffirmed our Party's and State's policy of respect for freedom of belief and non-belief and urged the delegates and monks, nuns and believers throughout the country to promote the fine traditions of Buddhism and make worthy contributions to the building and defence of the homeland.

KIEN AN

A Husband-and-Wife Team of Art Photographers

Last September, an exhibition of artistic photos by Dan Que and Pham Tue was organized by the Vietnam Association of Art Photographers, the Hanoi Association of Literature and Art and the Department of Exhibition of the Ministry of Culture.

Dan Que and Pham Tue may be the only photographer couple in Vietnam. For more than thirty years they have pursued parallel and cooperative careers. They both like travelling and share a love of people, nature and plastic beauty.

But they do have specific traits. Dan Que excels in plastic composition and classical structures. Her works show perfection of line and frame, and extend into deep perspectives. They radiate plastic beauty, femininity and grace.

The year 1961 was a landmark for her. She created a masterpiece, *The Tower of Co Le Pagoda* and became Pham Tue's student and later companion. *Fighting Drought* was another success and ranked her high among the few Vietnamese women pioneers in artistic photograph.

Born in 1937, Dan Que is a member of the Vietnam Association of Literature and Art, the Vietnam Association of Art Photographers, and the Hanoi Association of Literature and Art. Her works have been displayed at many exhibitions at home and abroad — in the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary, France, Japan and Mongolia... She has been awarded many prizes and diplomas. Her *Bumper Harvest* got the first prize at the International Photo Competition organized by the Soviet review *New Times* in 1975.

Unlike his wife and colleague, Pham Tue likes to have his hands free in composition although he is also a master of classical structures. Witness his *Bo Nau Grotto* which brought him a bronze medal and a prize at an International Exhibition of Artistic Photos in Rumania. Sometimes he disregards the

THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE ARMY

GDR athlete Bukhet Mayer congratulating Ngo Xuan Chuyen who won the title of "The Strongest Man in the Army".

Photo : TRUNG NGOC

Drawing experience from the contests organized by the army of the GDR, in 1979, a sports competition of a new kind was held for the first time for members of the Vietnam People's Army: "Competition for the Title of the Strongest Man in the Army". It involves four familiar exercises: push-up on the parallel bars, arms-bending on the horizontal bar, knee-bending with a 25 kg barbell on the shoulders; standing hop-step-and jump. The contest has attracted large numbers of armymen from all units in the country. It has been organized regularly every year.

This year, the eighth competition was held in Hanoi on 9 and 10 October 1987 with the participation of nearly 80 athletes from 19 teams. The team prize was won by the team from the Third Military Zone, which received the challenge banner of the People's Army daily. This was the fourth win of the team. The individual title went to Ngo Xuan Chuyen, from the Fifth Military Zone, who scored 1,413 points and became "the strongest man in the army". This was his third win. This time he broke two records with 177 push-ups on the parallel bars and 100 arms-bendings on the horizontal bar.

Unlike previously, this year the competition was not held in a stadium but in Lenin Park, with a larger number of spectators watching. Henceforward, such competitions can be organized not only for soldiers, but also for militiamen, the youth, and students.

Formerly the time during which each exercise was performed was unlimited, leading to over-exertion and possible harm to health. This year, the "arms-bending on the horizontal bar" and "knee-bending with barbell" were limited to two minutes each, and the push-ups on the parallel bars, three minutes. The competition was attended by observers from the Military Institute who are working out programmes of exercises for soldiers.

This year, the competition assumed an "international" character with the participation of the German athlete Bukhet Mayer who has four times won the title "The Strongest Man in the National Army of the GDR". The Lao People's Army and the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Army also sent observers with a view to organizing similar contests in their countries.

HONG SON

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foreground to approach his object directly: his *Old Militiaman* is an impressive close-up of an elderly anti-aircraft gunner in action during the resistance war against US aggression. It brought him a medal at the International Bifota Exhibition of Artistic Photos in the German Democratic Republic. Cultural themes are his forte.

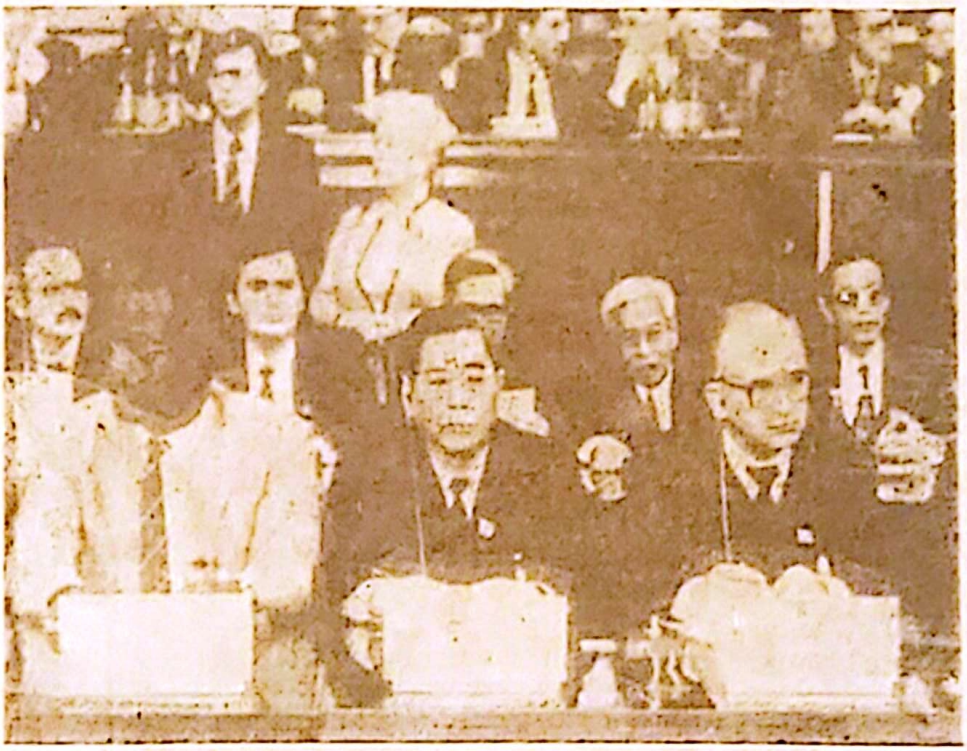
Born in 1930, Pham Tue has been a camera enthusiast since the 1950's. For many years he was a photo reporter for Vietnam News Agency. At present, he is a photography expert at the Department of Exhibition of the Ministry of Culture, a membrer of the Vietnam Association of Art Photographers, and the Hanoi Association of Literature and Art.

The above-mentioned exhibition of 120 artistic photos by Pham Tue and Dan Que displayed only a small part of the works of the couple who together have totalled 76 years of creative work so far.

MANH CAU

AT THE MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF 178 PARTIES, MOVEMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS IN MOSCOW ON NOVEMBER 4 AND 5, 1987, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Nguyễn Văn Linh, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, delivered a speech. Following is the full text of his speech.



At the meeting of representatives of 178 Parties, movements and organizations, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

Photo: VNA

Dear Comrade General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev,

Dear leaders of parties, countries and peace and progressive organisations,

We fully agree with the analysis by Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev concerning the trend of developments in the world and the way to solve the urgent problems facing mankind. The 20th century has so far witnessed two world wars. Over the past 40 years, nations have constantly faced the danger of a nuclear holocaust. However, today there has appeared a practical possibility of struggling to eliminate nuclear weapons and safeguard world peace.

We fully support all efforts to establish a comprehensive system of security in the world as proposed by the Soviet Union. A global and allround security system must go along with the establishment of a new world economic order. Together with the establishment of a system of security and cooperation in Europe, the foundation of

such a system in Asia and the Pacific will assume major significance with regard to the setting up of an allround security system in the world.

Asia and the Pacific — the largest and most populous region of the world — was subjected to colonial and imperialist oppression for centuries and was the first victim of US atomic bombs. Over the past 40 years it has been the scene of the longest and bloodiest local wars in the world, of which the biggest was the US war in Vietnam. The struggle of the Asian peoples over the past 40 years has brought about far-reaching changes beneficial to peace, national independence and socialism. Having failed in their local wars and in the establishment of the Baghdad and SEATO military blocs, the imperialists have deployed a new strategy in Asia and the Pacific, bringing together reactionary forces to oppose the forces of socialism, national independence, democracy and peace, and maintaining tension in order to defend their selfish interests in this region.

A very arduous and complicated struggle lies ahead. However, after 40 years of bitter struggle, there has appeared the possibility of rallying the broadest spectrum of forces in Asia and the Pacific and building a system of security and cooperation for the whole region. Since the '70s the Soviet Union and the forces of peace and revolution in Asia have stepped up their struggle against the collusion between the forces of imperialism and reaction in this region. The victory of the revolution in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea and the defeat of the United States in Indochina have brought about a new situation in Southeast Asia. After 40 years of prolonged local wars, the nations in Asia and the Pacific urgently need peace to develop their economies. The trend toward peaceful coexistence among nations and peaceful settlement of regional conflicts has become stronger than the trend toward confrontation and tension.

The famous statement of Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok has been warmly welcomed in Asia and the Pacific. A lasting peace in Asia and the Pacific can only be achieved through the common efforts of all countries and peoples. Vietnam highly values and fully supports the New Delhi statement about a world without nuclear weapons and without the use of force in international relations. We support the constructive peace initiatives of the People's Republic of Mongolia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and welcome the proposal to establish a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia and the great efforts of the Republic of India and Indonesia aimed at accelerating dialogues for peace in the region. Vietnam fully supports the tireless activities of the fraternal parties, of progressive parties, of all forces of peace and of the organisations and mass movements which have gathered into the broadest-ever front for peace, security, development and cooperation in the region. These activities, coupled with the efforts of the forces of peace and progress in Europe and in the world, are the determinant factor for the establishment of a comprehensive system for peace and security in the world.

In the past 40 years, Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea underwent three wars, the biggest of which was the US war. Following the US defeat in Vietnam, the peoples of the three Indochinese countries should have been able to enjoy peace and the countries in Southeast Asia should have been able to co-exist peacefully. But once again the peoples of the countries in Southeast Asia have had to face a policy of intervention, pressure and threat on the part of the imperialists and the forces of reaction. Through bitter struggle, the tireless efforts of the three Indochinese countries, of the Soviet Union and of the other forces of peace, are creating the possibility of breaking the impasse which has lasted eight years and opening a process of negotiation to settle the Kampuchean issue and the question of peace and security in Southeast Asia in general.

Coordinating their actions with those of other countries and peoples in the struggle for peace and development in the Asian-Pacific region and in the world, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea have persisted in their struggle to achieve an early peaceful solution to the Kampuchean question on the basis of guaranteeing the independence and sovereignty of Kampuchea and ensuring peace and security for Southeast Asia and the Asian-Pacific region. We fully agree with, and support the policy of national reconciliation proclaimed on 27 August 1987 and the five-point statement of 8 October of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea on a peaceful solution to the conflict in this country. The improvement of Sino-Soviet relations is a step toward reducing tension in Asia and the Pacific. In the long-term interests of Vietnam and China and in the interests of peace, national independence and socialism in Asia and the Pacific and in the world, Vietnam wishes to normalize its relations with the People's Republic of China.

We express our strong solidarity with, and support for, the struggles of the forces of peace and progress in other regions, for the struggles of the peoples of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Chile, of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and of the peoples in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, for peace, against imperialism, zionism and apartheid.

We take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the other fraternal parties and to the forces of peace and progress in the world for their strong support and their great and noble assistance to the struggle and the efforts in construction of the Vietnamese people.

We are firmly confident that this meeting of historic significance will impart a new momentum to the struggle for our common ideals, namely peace and progress on our planet.

Thank you. ●

THE CORNERSTONE OF VIETNAM'S FOREIGN POLICY

NGUYEN CO THACH

Member of the Political Bureau of the CPV Central Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ever since the founding of the Communist Party of Vietnam and especially since the birth of our worker-peasant State, the Vietnamese Party and State have consistently regarded the strengthening of solidarity and cooperation in all fields with the Soviet Union as the cornerstone of our foreign policy.

This principled policy stems from the revolutionary nature of our State and from the great contributions of the Russian October Revolution to the liberation of mankind from all forms of oppression and exploitation. It also stems from the immense assistance of the Soviet Union to the long and arduous struggle of the Vietnamese people to liberate and reunify their homeland and take it to socialism.

Mankind has lived under oppression and exploitation for more than 10,000 years. The Russian October Revolution ushered in a new era in which the world's people will liberate themselves from all oppression and exploitation and build a new society without exploitation of man by man. The Russian October Revolution is a source of inspiration for, and the reliable support of, all oppressed classes and nations rising up to shatter all fetters and build a new, free and happy life.

Whereas the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries were the time when colonialism and imperialism used gunboats to conquer and subjugate other nations in the world, the 20th century, under the impact of the October Revolution, has seen the collapse of colonialism and the birth of a hundred independent countries.

The Soviet Union is the trail-blazer pointing the way to socialism and communism. Advancing on this uncharted path, it has endured innumerable sacrifices and suffered many failures; it has committed mistakes but has also recorded great victories. The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union summed up Soviet failures as well as successes. It has been taking the country to an ever higher stage and strongly developing the superiority of socialism. Seventy years after the October Revolution, socialism has become a world system accounting for more than 40% of the world's industrial output. The experiences of the Soviet Union constitute the very precious assets of all socialist countries and of the whole of mankind. The Vietnamese people, as they advance on the road of socialist construction, attach immense value to those Soviet experiences.

The Soviet Union has opened a new era in international relations. Together with the other socialist countries, it is building a new system of international relations based on the principles of equality and friendly cooperation in the spirit of socialist internationalism. Together with the other socialist countries, the Soviet Union has tirelessly worked for healthy international relations, peaceful coexistence, settlement of all disputes by peaceful means, and for a world without arms and war.

The tremendous sacrifices endured by the Soviet Union in the Second World War saved mankind from the scourge of fascism. Even at a time when the Soviet economy still lagged behind that of the United States, the Soviet people accepted immense sacrifices in order to build up its defence capabilities and serve as the bulwark of world peace. What would have been the fate of mankind if the United States alone had possessed nuclear weapons? The Soviet Union's great and high sense of responsibility have played a decisive role in the issue of disarmament. They are liberating mankind from the nightmare of a nuclear holocaust.

The Soviet Union was the first country to send a man into outer space.

While many states in the course of history have brought and are bringing disasters to mankind, the Soviet people have borne the heaviest sacrifices and made the biggest contributions to human happiness. In our era, these are the bases on which rests the policy of our Party and State: to unite and cooperate in every field with the Soviet Union.

Our principled policy toward the Soviet Union is also based on the direct role played by the Soviet people in the revolutionary cause of our people.

It may be said that had it not been for the Russian October Revolution the Indochinese Communist Party, the predecessor of the present Communist Party of Vietnam, would not have come into existence. Had it not been for the victory of the Soviet Red Army

over German fascism and Japanese militarism, the August Revolution would not have triumphed in Vietnam in 1945. Had it not been for the Soviet Union, Vietnam could not have defeated French colonialism, US imperialism and international reaction, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam could not have come into existence. Without the assistance of the Soviet Union Vietnam could not have built socialism starting from a backward economy and bypassing the stage of capitalist development.

During the past half-century and more, Vietnamese-Soviet friendship has been built up and strengthened in the flames of our national liberation struggle and building of socialism. During the resistance against the French colonialists and the US imperialists, our Party and people judiciously combined the strength of the nation with that of the time and turned to full account the force of international solidarity, first of all, Soviet solidarity. We thereby succeeded in defeating the most aggressive imperialist chieftains of our time and firmly defending the gains of the Vietnamese revolution. In their turn, due to their tremendous sacrifices and the glorious victories won in those two historic tests of strength, our people made a worthy contribution to the consolidation of the position and strength of the Soviet Union and of the world socialist system, seriously weakened US-led imperialism and created favourable conditions for the revolution to develop powerfully in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The great victories of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea in 1975 put a definite end to US neo-colonialism and brought into being the three socialist countries in Indochina. The victory of the Kampuchean revolution in 1979 did away with the genocidal Pol Pot regime aided and abetted by external reactionary forces which used it in an attempt to oppose Vietnam, sow division among the Indochinese countries and destroy their solidarity. The birth of the People's Republic of Kampuchea has led to a new situation in which the three Indochinese countries closely unite with one another and with the Soviet Union in national construction and defence. The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between Vietnam and the Soviet Union on 3 November 1978 has upgraded the relations between the two countries and led to cooperation in all fields between them. It constitutes an effective instrument serving socialist building and national defence in Vietnam and the Soviet Union over the past years.

Today, in the light of the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Vietnamese-Soviet relations have entered a new stage in which the two countries are at one on renovation and restructuring, on the orientation of their socio-economic development, on their international line, and are closely cooperating with each other in the struggle for peace, national independence and social progress in the world and for peace and security in the Asian and Pacific region.

Our Party and people fully support the far-reaching and thorough-going restructuring of all spheres of social and economic life now under way in the Soviet Union. As Comrade Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the Party Central Committee, said during his visit to the Soviet Union in May 1987. "With the restructuring policy of a revolutionary character set forth at the 27th Congress and the plenary session of the Central Committee of the CPSU in January 1987, the great gains of the October Revolution and of socialism over the past 70 years have been raised to new historic heights, and have demonstrated the creative strength of Marxism-Leninism in both theory and practice. This is a very valuable experience for the fraternal parties to apply to their concrete conditions."

Inspired by the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam expressed high determination to effect deep renovation in all spheres of socio-economic life in order to take the country continuously forward. In the execution of the important and complex tasks set by the Sixth Congress, an imperative demand is to increase the effectiveness of our cooperation with the Soviet Union in all domains — political, economic, scientific and technological, cultural and ideological. We can do so only by resolutely abolishing the mechanism of centralized bureaucratism and subsidy-based management and renovating our thinking and work style, our personnel work, and the mechanism of our cooperation with the Soviet Union. Our Party and people highly value the practical measures taken by the Soviet Party and Government to renovate and increase the effectiveness of this cooperation "aimed at strengthening Vietnam and enabling it to stand firm on its own feet and go forward", as Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev has asserted. For our part, we are also resolved to work along that line. On 7 May last, the Political Bureau of our Party Central Committee met to review Vietnamese-Soviet cooperation in the past ten years and find out the causes of the errors committed. It decided to renovate and to take Vietnamese-Soviet economic relations to higher forms of cooperation in the direction of socialist economic integration, specialisation and cooperation in production, abolition of the mechanism of subsidy-based bureaucratic management and switch over completely to socialist business accounting. The modes and forms of cooperation are to be diversified on all three levels: the government, the department and the enterprise, in order to link responsibility with interests on both sides. This renovation is completely in line with the restructuring process in the Soviet Union. There is no doubt that in the spirit of renovation of the 27th CPSU and 6th CPV congresses and on the strength of the fine results of the visit to the Soviet Union by Comrade Nguyen Van Linh, as shown in the signing of a series of important agreements on economic cooperation, Vietnamese-Soviet cooperation in the days to come will take a new step forward in its qualitative development. This is a change from what is essentially assistance

and commerce to a higher form, i.e. cooperation in production. This will mark an important turning-point in Vietnamese-Soviet bilateral relations, and create favourable conditions for us to better exploit our resources and take part in a broader and deeper way in the socialist international division of labour. We are confident that Vietnamese-Soviet cooperation will be not only a model of militant and fraternal solidarity but also a shining example of relations between a developed industrial country and an economically backward one, showing how a developed socialist country can help an economically backward one to gradually raise its level of development closer to that of advanced socialist countries.

In the present situation in the Asian and Pacific region and in the light of the statement by Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok on 28 July 1986, Vietnam and the Soviet Union are to play an important role in the struggle for peace, security and cooperation in this region and in the world. Over the past 40 years and more, the Asian and Pacific region has been the scene of most local wars in the world. The mighty growth of the Soviet Union, the successes won by the revolutionary forces in Asia, and the setbacks suffered by US imperialism in the 70's have completely changed the situation in this vast region in favour of peace and revolution. The famous statement by Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok and the Joint Indo-Soviet Statement in New Delhi in November 1986 set forth a programme of action aimed at strengthening peace, security and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit among all countries in Asia and the Pacific. Over the past 40 years, Southeast Asia has been one of the hottest spots of Asia and the world. The three countries in Indochina were victims of the most prolonged and bloodiest aggressive wars.

Their historic victory meant defeat for imperialism and the reactionary forces. It brought about the formation of two groups of countries, the Indochinese and the ASEAN countries and opened up a practical possibility for peaceful coexistence among the nations in this region. In this context, Vietnamese-Soviet friendship and solidarity and coordinated action by the three Indochinese countries and the Soviet Union constitute a factor of prime importance for solving the question of peace and security in Southeast Asia and the whole of the Asian and Pacific region. Our Party and people express high appreciation of, and sincere gratitude for, the Soviet Union's consistent stand with regard to the struggle of the three Indochinese countries for peace, security, cooperation and good neighbourliness in Southeast Asia. This stand is evidence of the complete identity of views between the two parties and the two countries with regard to an eventual solution to problems of Southeast Asia and the whole of Asia. The Soviet Union's strong support for the three Indochinese countries was once again reaffirmed by Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev during the visit to the Soviet Union by Comrade Nguyen Van Linh. He said: "Now as before, the Soviet Union supports the efforts of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of Kampuchea aimed at building the bases of socialism, defending their national independence and sovereignty, consolidating their fraternal alliance and cooperation in every field, an important factor for peace and security in Southeast Asia." In close coordination with the Soviet Union's policy toward Asia and the Pacific, the three Indochinese countries advocate the settlement of the Kampuchean issue by political means on the basis of the definitive elimination of the genocidal Pol Pot regime and a firm guarantee for the revolutionary gains of Kampuchea. Such a settlement will create a framework for peaceful coexistence in Southeast Asia beneficial to peace and socialism in this region.

In this year of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, looking back over the past development of Vietnamese-Soviet relations, we have sufficient grounds to affirm this truth: in its transition to socialism from a backward economy bypassing the stage of capitalist development, a country must have the support and assistance of, and cooperate with, the Soviet Union. This bears out the viewpoint of Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc (President Ho Chi Minh) when he made this appeal to the colonial peoples back in the 20's: "We ought to get the alliance and friendship of the Soviet Union, the only country in the world at present that can give the oppressed nations absolutely sincere assistance, disinterested fraternal assistance on an equal footing"[1].

Acting upon the teachings of President Ho Chi Minh, our Party and people pledge to remain for ever loyal to the policy of close solidarity and cooperation with the Soviet Union, considering it to be the cornerstone of the foreign policy of our Party and State, the sacred internationalist sentiment of every Vietnamese and the sure guarantee for the successful implementation of the resolution of the Sixth Party Congress and the complete success of socialism in Vietnam. At the same time, in a spirit of vigorous renovation, we pledge to fulfil our responsibilities in order to increase the effectiveness of Vietnamese-Soviet cooperation and to make Vietnamese-Soviet relations into a model of new-type relations between two fraternal countries engaged in the building of socialism, thus meeting the needs and interests of the people of the two countries, the interests of socialism and peace and progress in the world.

Our solidarity and cooperation in all fields with the Soviet Union is aimed at putting into effect what Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev said at the close of his talks with Comrade Nguyen Van Linh last May: "The Soviet Union must be strong, Vietnam must be strong." ●

1. *French-language paper* Le Paria *published by Nguyen Ai Quoc in Paris in the 1920's. M. 38.*

LET WRITERS AND ARTISTS ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO RENOVATION

Speech by CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh at a meeting with nearly one hundred writers, artists and cultural workers in Hanoi on Oct. 6 — 7, 1987. Sub-titles are provided by *Vietnam Courier*.

• What has caused the poor performance of art and literature in the past decade? • Writers and artists must be courageous; they must be driven by pure motives and not let themselves be deterred by difficulties and risks • While good people and good work must be singled out for praise, the bad and the wicked must be held up to contempt and ostracism • Literature and art must play the role of a forecaster, a herald, in society's spiritual life • The spirit of renovation emanating from the Sixth CPV Congress should guide artistic creation.

Comrades,

It has been a privilege to be with you these two days, listening to ideas expressed by many of you. I appreciate all that you've said because you've talked straight from the shoulder. You've dealt with many questions, with substance and insight. The things you said came from the heart, perhaps because you'd lived with them for a long time. One may say it was a catharsis.

Many of you have spoken, each expressing himself or herself in a different way. There has been, however, consensus on the following points:

1. The role of culture, art and literature: this role and the place of writers, artists and cultural workers in social life have been made light of by the Party's leadership for many years. This problem has been treated at length by many speakers, who illustrated their points with concrete, vivid examples.

2. Party leadership regarding culture, art and literature was, as noted by many, undemocratic, authoritarian, high-handed.

3. The organisation and management of culture, art and literature, and related policies were often marred by inequity and injudiciousness. This has aggravated your difficulties and hardships. People engaged in culture, art and literature are also producers, and their products are of a highly refined kind. It's a pity that investments in brain work, in artistic creation, have been inadequate to regenerate your creative powers.

Those were the main points I was able to gather from your remarks. In my view, they were the main impediments to a full development of your potentials. I've the feeling that what we've achieved in this field in the more than ten years since the reunification of the country and the start of socialist construction on a national scale, has been meagre in comparison with what we had accomplished during the two wars of resistance. During those wars, you made greater contributions, rendered greater services, and showed greater talents, but we cannot say the same of your record for the past decade. That's what I meant by meagre. Now, having listened to you, I can see more clearly what has kept you from contributing as much as you had done in previous stages of the revolution. Of late, there've been good works that have drawn warm responses from the public, but they were too few. There should've been more of them. Now, in the spirit of renovation emanating from the Sixth Party Congress, we must find out what has caused this "paucity" in artistic creation.

There's no gainsaying that we've achieved something in the socio-economic field. Unfortunately, we've also made many mistakes. Had it not been for them, life wouldn't have been so hard for the people, for people who work honestly. Now, as you all know, the Party is trying to correct past mistakes. To do this, causes must be sought out and corrective measures taken. Renovation is a far-reaching, thorough-going revolution. It means renovation in thinking, in policy-making, in organisation, in personnel. People in leading positions who are conservative, persist in their mistakes and refuse to undertake genuine renovation are no longer fit for their jobs.

You've talked a great deal about the need to "untie the strings" to

provide room for the full development of art and literature. Who's going to do this ? I think the action must be initiated by the Party, which must "untie the strings", in organisation, in policies and regulations. So far, it has never occurred to me that bureaucratic subsidy-based management has been also plaguing your activities. New rules must now be formulated and written into laws to ensure the development of art and literature. The Party and the State must buckle down to this task as soon as possible.

On the other hand, I believe that things must be done by yourselves. That's what I meant this morning when I made this comment as someone was speaking: "God helps him that helps himself." You don't want things to be imposed on you. You don't want to be like a train running on laid tracks. You want to have free hands in your business. Just as in economic activities, democracy must be promoted for the benefit of producers, you must be masters in your field.

You've spoken of your fear of strictures and taboos, and particularly of a kind of threat hanging in the air. You're more afraid of it than of censorship. It's the view held by certain people that you have departed from the class stand, from the Party line, etc. I know how you feel, and it was out of the sympathy for you that I exclaimed this morning "God helps him that helps himself." We must be strict with ourselves. If we're sure that we're in the right and acting constructively, we must defend the truth firmly, with courage.

I believe that in any event you must not "bend your pens" in order to please people. As long as you can't write as you wish, continue your research, continue to enrich your knowledge of life. But don't write opportunistic pieces. In art and literature, one must be brave; one must act with a clear conscience and never lose heart. Remember this line by Uncle Ho: "Poetry must have steel in it". By "steel," in my view, he meant a "revolutionary spirit".

Now, I've a few suggestions to make.

Act with courage to overcome the present difficulties. In the days of our underground activity, revolutionary art and literature were faced with great difficulties and dangers. Then, during the two wars of resistance, art and literature were highly combative and developed strongly to serve national liberation. The atmosphere was very favourable to artistic creation. The Party's leadership did everything to promote it. You enjoyed complete freedom to fight the enemy. Who could blame you for doing so ? On the other hand, it was clear whom we should praise in our works: our heroic fighters, our heroic people.

Today, however, it's difficult to decide what to praise and what to condemn. Often, evils are found right among the people, in people holding important posts in the Party and the State apparatuses. For a long time we're used to the simplistic notion that socialism was immaculate. That was a utopian, naive attitude. I myself held that belief for some time. Now that we're confronted with the realities of socialist construction in the period of transition, it's very hard to pass judgement on people who were born and bred under the old regime and were marked by its faults and limitations. Often you can't draw the line between right and wrong.

So the point is to be sharp-eyed and scientific-minded. It takes great courage in artistic creation to deal with the problems of life and society. History will tell whether you've been right or wrong. If mistakes have been made, they must be rectified.

It seems to be a common belief that with the establishment of people's power and the start of socialist construction, everything should be all right. Artistic creation, therefore, tends to be laudatory, and to be made through "rose-tinted glasses". This is the vogue. People who write about the seamy side are accused of "blackening the regime". Personally, I think that in addition to writing about good people and good things, one must also portray bad people and bad things to arouse public indignation and censure. To do so is not to be critical of the regime. One just seeks to expose persons and practices that go against the noble ideals of socialism.

You must depict incisively and condemn severely all bureaucrats, bullies, thieves, hoarders, speculators, parasites, all superstitious practices, all manifestations of moral degradation. You must make the whole of society hate evils, push them back, and avoid committing them. At the same time, you must paint faithful, convincing pictures of honest people engaged in manual and mental labour, people who in spite of privations and temptations, are working with self-abnegation and courage for national construction and defence, in enthusiastic response to the Party's call for renovation.

Our Party is one in power. A Party must rely on the people for its existence and development. It must take the people as the roots. In the days when our Party was fighting for power, it depended on the people for support. Now, the possession of power is likely to lead to alienation from the masses, arrogance and high-handedness, greed and embezzlement, bureaucratism and authoritarianism in economic and ideological leadership. All this must be strongly criticised and condemned. That, of course, won't be easy. People in positions of power are likely to be touchy. You may, for instance, have to resort to parables. Formerly a number of critical books were banned and their authors could get into serious trouble. But should we "bend our pens" to make things palatable to such people ? I'm of the opinion that an artist who does this will deprive himself

of all revolutionary quality. One must hold fast to socialist realism. There're people who claim to have adopted that stand, but who are afraid of writing truthfully, of criticising and condemning evils to help in the emergence of the new man. As honest writers and artists, you must safeguard your purity and clarity of mind.

I can't go very deeply into matters of art and literature, not being an expert in this field. I'm speaking only as a lover of art and literature. I entirely agree with the view that a cultural fighter, in addition to wielding a sharp knife to excise all that's bad, must act as a sort of ferment to bring about the birth of new elements in society. We must be very perceptive to the new. Only in this way can art and literature play a vanguard role in the spiritual life of society. At this meeting, many of you have spoken about the forecasting character of art and literature. Thanks to their sensitivity, writers and artists must be able to tell in their works what good or bad things are likely to happen. They must be able to predict the demise of bad things which, at the moment, may still appear vigorous and the coming into full bloom of good things which have barely sprouted. Such forecasting is very necessary.

You're the engineers of the human soul. You must play your part in paving the way for the emergence of new people in whom, unfortunately many shortcomings, even vices, may still linger on from the past. Don't be idealistic and indulge in wishful thinking. Don't depict people as if they were saints. You must perceive their failings in order to make them better.

Socialist realism will fail us if it cannot make us look ahead with confidence and overcome the present difficulties. In your works, the public must see not only the dark spots but also the light beyond them.

The things I've just said were fully dealt with in your speeches. Yet, it seems that you're still filled with apprehension about certain "ghosts". Renovation was initiated by the Sixth Congress and the Resolution adopted by it threw the door wide open for you. That, however, doesn't mean that everything will be smooth sailing. The road we are to travel is not a straight one. It's full of twists and turns. I could not help starting the column "Things To Be Done Now" although I am not a writer or a journalist. It has elicited positive responses from many quarters, but some people have accused me of "blackening the regime" and "trying to launch a cultural revolution". Still I believe that we must push back the shadows. It's like weeding the fields to help rice to grow. Good people and good things will emerge if bad people and bad things are pushed back. The point is whether one has the courage to point to the latter. That's why my sympathy is with you.

I want to say again that the Sixth Congress has opened the door for you. Soon a resolution on culture, art and literature will be formulated by the Political Bureau and the Secretariat on the basis of a draft programme by the Committee for Culture, Art and Literature.

We all know the proverb: "Only if one has enough to eat can one uphold the Doctrine". I see the necessity to settle matters relating to living conditions and management in your department before any further progress can be thought of.

We may be certain that the Party and the State will adopt appropriate policies regarding your department. I believe that once the strings are thus untied it will soar up to the sky like a freed bird. Our culture, art and literature will reap a rich harvest.

I wish you good health, patience and courage in your work. I look forward to enjoying art works that will prove equal to the new stage of our revolution.

THE POWER...

(Continued from page 1)

27 August 1987, made public its policy of national reconciliation, which invites "all factions on the other side and their leaders, except Pol Pot and some of his close associates, to join in discussions on national reconciliation on the basis of the definitive elimination of genocide and to work together with the entire people to defend and build the country in peace and stability."

The initiative taken by Phnom Penh has had wide repercussions. From the other side, where growing signs of confusion have been observed, defectors have crossed over to the people's ranks in increasing numbers. Everyone is waiting for the dialogue among Kampucheans, now begun to all intents and purposes, to be accelerated. Reticence from certain quarters notwithstanding, the foreign capitals concerned have got ready to contribute to the settlement of the problem. Naturally Hanoi being the closest ally of Phnom Penh has been moving in the same direction, aiming at a solution acceptable to all parties. In any event, it is determined to complete the withdrawal of its volunteers by 1990, firmly convinced that by then the people's regime in Phnom Penh would be able to forge ahead against wind and tide.

In our world bristling with nuclear weapons and filled with intrigues worthy of the space age, dialogue has proved to be the best, if not the only, way to solve all outstanding issues. Might should no longer prevail, but reason.

A Vietnamese proverb runs like this: "Nothing generates more wisdom than reason, and more strength than reasoning."

May the year that has just begun stay the course under the sign of reason, moved by the power of reasoning. ●

The People's Mastery as Exercised Through the Media

Editor's Note: At a recent seminar on "How to make better use of the power of the media" held in Ho Chi Minh City on 12 October 1987, Tran Trong Tan, Head of the Propaganda and Training Department of the Party Central Committee, made a speech which has been reproduced in full in many Vietnamese press publications. We publish it below in translation with a few minor cuts.

* * *

Let me tell you about a recent happening: In the city of Hue, a reporter of the paper *Binh Tri Thien* died. There were many mourners, among them several dozen people with modest social positions: small traders, hawkers, pedicab drivers... They said they were neither relatives nor friends of the deceased but wanted nonetheless to come to pay him their last tribute. "In his reports," they said, "he took up the cudgels for us against the bullies and those who abused their power." This is further evidence of the fact that journalists who fight for the rights of the people are liked and supported by them.

Then, in the report by Tran Huy Quang, published in the weekly *Van Nghe* (Literature and Art) and entitled "The accused speaks", there is the passage where a man, claiming to have been victimized, says, "I want to kneel down and bow my thanks first to Comrade N.V.L. and then to the press."

The above happenings have raised in my mind these thoughts:

— The Party's emphasis on the fight in the press against negative phenomena is a very judicious decision which conforms to the wish of the people;

— The fight against negative phenomena conducted by a number of press publications has brought more confidence to the masses.

However, we may also see that the masses still play a passive role in this struggle. They are not yet the protagonists. They still look to journalists to take up the cudgels for them; to those who do this they bow their thanks; but they don't write articles on their own, nor do they come to see journalists to tell them about the negative phenomena they have experienced. Only after the masses have become the protagonists in the struggle will the movement assume a mass character. In fact, little has been done so far by the media in this field. Press publications number 253 throughout the country, and journalists nearly 6,000, but so far only about 30 publications have printed articles against negative phenomena, with facts, names and addresses supplied.

The Party's directive on "Strengthening Party leadership aimed at a better use of the media in the struggle against negative phenomena" has drawn our attention to that point. The words "better use" imply that the media have accomplished good things, but ought to do even better. But we must bear in mind that what they have done is nothing compared with the negative situation at present. The directive also says that it is the Party's leadership, not leadership by Party committees, that must be strengthened. This means that it is the responsibility of the Party itself to lead a movement by the working class and various strata of the working people, both manual and brain workers, in which the press is to be their instrument in the fight against negative phenomena. The point is for the Party to give leadership to the masses in their use of the media. The masses are to control and use the media in their struggle against negative phenomena. It is such a mass movement that the Party seeks to launch. Editors and reporters must in the name of the Party give leadership to this movement and arouse the people's will to use the media in their struggle. It may be said that this is the practical enforcement of the people's right to be the masters, as exercised through the press. Before that directive of the Party Secretariat, some people had viewed the open fight in the press against negative phenomena with some anxiety, worrying about possible enemy penetration and distortion of the movement. But so far their worries have proved groundless. The directive did point to certain slips, as you all know. But one must not indulge in unfair criticism of those slight errors and thereby weaken the press: this will do a great deal of harm.

The word "negative" embraces a wide-ranging field. The directive points out that the present fight against negative phenomena aims primarily at purifying the Party and raising its combativeness and that of the State apparatus, and at making for wholesome social relations. Negative phenomena arising from lack of adequate knowledge, from ignorance, are not dealt with in the directive. They are to be treated by encouraging people to learn from fellow-workers, from books, from practice. But with regard to such offenders as degenerate cadres and Party members and people engaged in large-scale speculation and smuggling, three kinds of measures must be taken:

— Criticism by wide-ranging public opinion;

— Strict Party discipline; and

— Severe State legislation.

The present struggle may go on for three or five years, after which the situation will return to normal. For it to be effective, it must be openly conducted

(Continued on page 17)

FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN VIETNAM AND CUBA

The Vietnam - Cuba Friendship and Cooperation Treaty signed five years ago marked a new development in the fine traditional relations between the two Parties, Governments and peoples.

Overcoming the difficulties inherent in our developing economies and compounded by repeated natural disasters and by the shouldering of heavy internationalist duties, our two countries have continued to strengthen their cooperation in many fields — economic, scientific, technological and commercial.

Many projects for cooperation in transport, water products, public health, education, tourism and construction have yielded practical results. Cuba is lending Vietnam funds to enlarge or build anew sugar refineries in South Vietnam capable of producing one thousand tonnes a day. It is cooperating with Vietnam in building a Hanoi — Ho Chi Minh City telecommunications line comprising 282 telephone channels, 172 telegraphic channels, a broadcasting channel and a television channel.

New plant and animal strains and advanced breeding techniques supplied by Cuba to Vietnam have contributed to the raising of productivity in crop plantation and in the breeding of cattle and poultry in particular.

Vietnam exports to Cuba agricultural and forest products, manufactured goods, and minerals. It mainly imports from Cuba cane sugar, cultural articles and equipment for cattle-breeding.

Internationally, the two countries have coordinated their action for lofty ideals: peace, independence, cooperation and development.

Both peoples feel elated at the great achievements scored in their all-round cooperation, comradely and fraternal cooperation between two socialist countries, two comrades-in-arms. Together with the great achievements obtained in all-round cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, this has helped Vietnam overcome its difficulties and build the material and technical bases of socialism. For its part, Vietnam feels that it must quickly draw the necessary lessons and take the necessary measures in order to solve its problems, make a better use of Cuban assistance, fufil all contracts signed with Cuba, and raise the cooperation between the two countries to an even higher level.

On this fifth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty, once again, our people sincerely thank the Cuban Government and people for their disinterested and effective support and assistance to our revolutionary cause. ●

PEACE FOR OUR PLANET

At present, mankind is witnessing new and encouraging developments in the trend toward dialogue in international relations, especially East-West relations. This trend started with the Soviet-US summit conferences in Geneva in 1985 and in Reykjavik in 1986. Of late, the Soviet Union and the United States have reached agreement in principle on the signing of a treaty on the abolition of medium- and short-range missiles in Europe and also on the holding of a third Soviet-US summit by the end of this year. These are very important steps toward eliminating the danger of nuclear war, and purifying the international political atmosphere.

It must be stressed that it was the famous peace initiatives of the Soviet Union combined with the powerful peace movement in different countries that have accelerated the process of dialogue aimed at reducing tension in international relations and brought East-West dialogue to a substantial stage. There is real possibility for the signing of an agreement on the complete abolition of medium-range missiles in Europe. However, the factors of tension remain. The road to disarmament is a difficult one and success can be achieved only step by step. To continue the resolute struggle for peace remains a major and urgent task of all nations. The world movement for peace must launch a powerful campaign which will make it impossible for anyone to ignore or wreck the chance to sign a treaty on the abolition of medium-range missiles in Europe, thereby achieving a historic breakthrough toward nuclear disarmament.

Mankind cannot accept nuclear war as fatal. Nuclear war means destruction and self-destruction. It is the biggest absurdity of the civilized world. In mankind's common house, the Earth, huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons exist, and no one can sleep in peace. The United Nations has launched a Week for Peace and Disarmament throughout the world and called on nations to close their ranks in the struggle for the greatest objective of our era: to safeguard peace. Let the "Peace Wave 1987" spread to all corners of the earth and turn the ideal of peace into an invincible force.

Having fallen victim to many war-related catastrophes the Vietnamese people, more than anyone else, treasure peace. By many practical deeds, our people have powerfully responded to the "Peace Wave 1987" call, and have actively contributed to the struggle of the world's people against the arms race and for disarmament, in order to achieve the noble objectives of our time, namely peace, national independence, welfare, democracy and social progress. ●

WHITHER THE TAKESHITA ADMINISTRATION?

The legacy left by Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone to his successor, Mr. Takeshita, includes major policies aimed at transforming Japan into a major military power, expanding its economic influence in the world, and further enriching Japanese monopoly capitalists. In his five years in power, Nakasone pursued a pro-American political line, tying Japan more closely to the global strategy of Washington. He fully committed himself to implement the Japan-US Security Treaty which aims at turning Japan into an "unsinkable aircraft-carrier" of the West in this part of the world. In execution of Washington's "responsibility sharing" strategy, the Nakasone Administration strove to modernize Japan's armed forces, increased Japanese military expenditures beyond the set limit of one per cent of the country's GNP, and pledged to exercize control over the sea lanes up to one thousand nautical miles from the Japanese coast so that the US could concentrate on building up its naval forces in the Persian Gulf, and most recently, committed Japan to the dangerous American SDI (Star Wars) programme. With its 1987 military budget of 23 billion US dollars, the third largest in the world, Japan is fast becoming a major military power. Nakasone also proposed amendments to the Japanese Constitution with a view to facilitating the militarisation of Japan.

Besides promising to continue Nakasone's policies, Takeshita, in his election platform, stressed that the core of Japan's foreign policy is to maintain close relations with the United States, strengthen its alliance with the latter and continue to implement the US-Japan Security Treaty, which means keeping Japan tied to the US war chariot. Takeshita also declared that he would continue to build up Japan's defence capabilities and strengthen its armed forces according to short-term and long-term plans worked out by the preceding administration, and pledged to "fulfil Japan's international obligations", carry on Japan's "economic, scientific and technical cooperation" with the countries in Asia and the Pacific, "assist the developing countries", "internationalize the *yen*", etc. In other words, the new Japanese Prime Minister says he will continue the economic and financial policies of the Nakasone Administration aimed at expanding Japan's influence in the world and stepping up the formation of the "Pacific economic community".

On the other hand, two burning issues left unsolved by the Nakasone Administration constitute major problems for Mr Takeshita. These are the structural reform of the Japanese economy made necessary by the sharp rise in the value of the *yen* which is causing serious problems for Japanese export industries, and the bitter and prolonged trade war with the United States. Under pressure from the United States and the EEC, Takeshita has pledged to expand the domestic market and turn the export-oriented Japanese economy into one relying on domestic demands. He promised to solve the problem of an excessive balance of trade surplus, and to increase imports. However, to restructure an export-dependent economy into one oriented toward the domestic market is no simple matter. Neither will it be easy to switch over to the export of capital and the increase of overseas investment in production facilities because this would inevitably lead to reduced domestic production, massive unemployment, and acute social conflict.

Mr. Takeshita takes over the reins of government at a moment when the international situation is undergoing important changes. The prospects of the signing of a Soviet-US Treaty on the abolition of medium- and short-range missiles and the holding of a Soviet-US summit in December have opened up new vistas of peace and international security.

The trend toward dialogue in the world and in the region aimed at solving outstanding problems through peaceful negotiations is gaining ground. The question being asked by many observers is whether the new leaders of Japan will be clear-headed enough to adopt constructive policies and measures consonant with this new trend. ●

A DIE-HARD UTTERLY ISOLATED

British Prime Minister Thatcher recently stood alone against the representatives of 47 member-countries of the British Commonwealth at a meeting in Vancouver (Canada), where she obstinately refused to sign a declaration imposing comprehensive sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Previously, she had time and again opposed decisions taken by the Commonwealth countries to punish South Africa, but never had she been so utterly isolated as this time. At the meeting, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said that her stand was "nonsensical and unrealistic". As a major power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Britain should work with other countries to abolish the apartheid regime, ensure respect for the right to freedom and democracy of the Black majority in South Africa, and create in Southern Africa an atmosphere of peace, stability and cooperation among independent and sovereign countries. Instead, together with the US, it has strongly supported the despotic apartheid regime in South Africa in defiance of the decisions of the Commonwealth and the UN.

Recently published data have revealed that the South African administration has been killing every year about 140,000 Black children under 5, and that about 4 million African children are now victims of the undeclared war unleashed by this administration against its neighbours. Does this bother British conscience in any way? As President of Zambia K. Kaounda, President of the Organization for African Unity (OAU), said, "the British Government does not agree with the policy of sanctions against South Africa because it has invested a total of 2.5 billion dollars in that country".

As everyone knows, apartheid is the root cause of oppression, injustice and constant instability in southern Africa. However, because they draw huge profits and large amounts of strategic materials from South Africa, the imperialist forces have turned their back on the urgent demands of the African people and the whole of progressive mankind and have sided with the racists and the aggressors.

By taking up the cudgels for the most heinous reactionary forces in the world and opposing the decision of the Commonwealth countries, Mrs. Thatcher is facing the rising tide of public indignation.

HANOI'S VIEWPOINT

THE PEOPLE'S...

(Continued from page 14)

in the press, in Party life, in activities of the mass organizations. Otherwise, the problem cannot be resolved.

This being the guideline, Party committees at various levels, in their study and implementation of Directive 15 must look into the case of press publications which have so far not participated in the struggle against negative phenomena. We cannot accept the fact that people who have done nothing will claim to have been error-free and may be "left in peace". Let us ask them: the revolution has entrusted you with a pen to fight for its ideals. Why should you turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to negative phenomena which have caused deep anguish among honest cadres and Party members and the people at large? The Party and the people provide you with food, clothing, paper, ink, printing equipment... How could you seek to evade your responsibilities when the Party and the people need your assistance? Such publications must be criticized, the reasons for their attitude sought out, and assistance given to them so that they will perceive their failings and overcome them in the near future. With regard to those papers which have joined the fight against negative phenomena, we must give them credit for the good things they have done, show appreciation of their efforts, and treasure their achievements. At the same time, assistance must be given to them to correct the inaccuracies and plan their future work. With regard to Party committees, their work must be reviewed: have they supported the fight against negative phenomena? or have they obstructed it? or have they been shilly-shallying? In the campaign to purify the Party, the first step planned by the Party Secretariat is to look into the appointment of key cadres at the central, provincial and city levels. If leading cadres should lack determination, if they should raise the standard of struggle only with trembling hands, an extremely dangerous situation would develop in which honest people wishing to fight would not dare to advance.

In the days ahead, the media should make better use of their power: they should hit hard and accurately; their blows should cause wide repercussions; a new momentum must be created for strengthening our regime. Thus to combat negative phenomena means to act positively. Praise of the good must accompany criticism of the bad so as not to give rise to the impression of an overwhelming predominance of the latter. In short, we must guard against two tendencies: either to resign ourselves to the situation, let things drift, keep away from possible collisions; or to act precipitately, not giving enough thought to the Party's policies and guidelines and not carefully considering the eventual results.

I wish you success in implementing Directive 15 of the Party Secretariat and creating an ever stronger current of public opinion against negative phenomena, thereby contributing to the strengthening of our Party, our State, and our regime. ●

MONGOLIAN CULTURAL DAYS IN VIETNAM (13 - 19 October 1987)

— *The opening ceremony was held at the Hanoi Municipal Theatre, after which Mongolian artistes presented a rich artistic programme.*

— *An exhibition of Mongolian books, photographs, and plastic arts was opened in Hanoi.*

— *A Mongolian Government delegation headed by Comrade Batrin Xunia, member of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and Minister of Culture, came to Vietnam on this occasion. It held working sessions with the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture.*

— *At the Van Ho Exhibition Centre in Hanoi, the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture held a cultural soirée.*

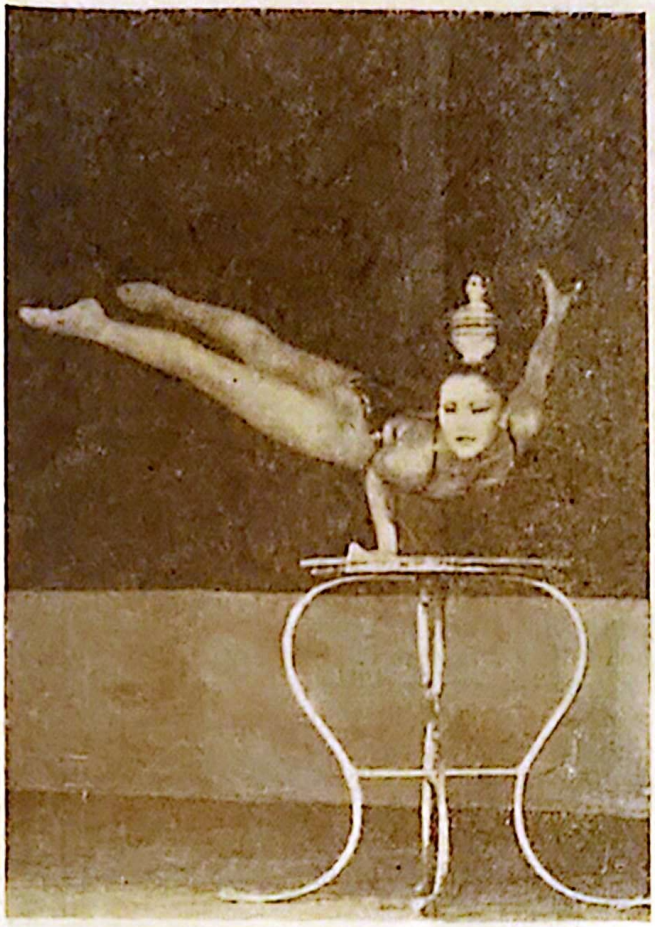
— *The Mongolian delegation visited some Vietnamese cultural institutions and projects.*

— *Nearly ten Mongolian feature films were shown in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City during a Mongolian film week.*

— *A Mongolian cultural soirée held in Ho Chi Minh City was attended by the Mongolian Government delegation, the Mongolian National Artistic Ensemble and more than five thousand city people.*

— *The closing ceremony of the Mongolian Cultural Days in Vietnam was held at the Municipal Theatre in Ho Chi Minh City.*

— *At the Thong Nhat Hall, on behalf of the Vietnamese Party and Government, Culture Minister Tran Van Phac presented 69 "Cultural Fighter" medals, the highest reward of the Vietnamese cultural branch, to the visiting Mongolian Government delegation and artistes.*



Acrobat Lodoi Inkhosenuk.

Photo: VAN HIEN

A Mongolian folk dance.

Photo: TRAN AM

Vietnam (13—19 October 1987)

THE FIRST MONGOLIAN PLAY STAGED ABROAD

The "Forgotten Melody", a play by Daramyn Batbayar, executive member of the Afro-Asian Writers' Association and Head of the Department of Theatre and Cinema under the Mongolian Ministry of Culture, conveys a message. It criticizes those of us who are forgetful of the past, which has contributed to our maturity and happiness. The play was staged by the Hanoi Drama Company on the occasion of the Days of Mongolian Culture in Vietnam. Director Hoang Quan Tao, who has achieved many successes over the past years, again scored a triumph. The public was enthralled although the play was a short one, with a cast of only four.

The preparations for this play were a lively manifestation of Mongolian-Vietnamese friendship. Devoted and efficacious help was provided by the Mongolian Embassy in Hanoi to the Hanoi Drama Company. Mongolian comrades carefully guided Vietnamese artistes in Mongolian ways: how to hold a pipe and how to dress. The costumes were sent in from Ulan Bator.

After watching the performance reserved for Mongolian friends working in Hanoi, the Mongolian Ambassador said, "We were greatly impressed. It was as if we were watching it being performed on an Ulan Bator stage."

At the close of the Days of Mongolian Culture in Vietnam, on behalf of the Mongolian Government, the Ambassador handed diplomas of commendation to Director Hoang Quan Tao and translator Dang Tran Can and to the cast. "The Vietnamese artistes have done even better than the script. This is the first time a Mongolian play has been performed by foreign artistes and they were Vietnamese artistes." This appreciation by the Mongolian cultural delegation to Vietnam confers high credit on the Hanoi Drama Company.

VU QUOC HUNG

A scene from the play: "The Forgotten Melody".
Photo: DINH QUANG THANH

MARRIAGE RITUALS IN VIETNAM

DUONG TAT TU

Marriage is at the same time an individual, family, and social affair. Vietnam is a multi-national country. Each nationality is heir to different customs and habits, which govern ceremonies as well as daily intercourse. This article will provide an outline of rituals connected with marriage among people living in the lowlands of both north and south Vietnam, and some information about customs prevalent among other ethnic groups.

Getting Acquainted

For many centuries the country lived under feudal regimes, whose ethics forbade free social intercourse between young men and women. These rules were particularly strict in the rural areas. Marriages were for the most part pre-arranged, with prime consideration given to correspondence of social position, wealth, etc., and very little to the feeling the two future partners might have for each other. Usually they did not know each other even by sight before the event was planned by their families. In Vietnam, as in a number of other Asian countries, an important role was played by a go-between, the matchmaker, who might be a man or a woman, usually the latter.

Against this social background, popular festivals assumed great significance for marriageable young people. They provided opportunities for them to get to know each other, however superficially. Let us mention in this connection the Spring Flower festival, the Perfume Pagoda pilgrimage, the Ban Flower festival in the Northwest highlands, the Thay pagoda festival in Ha Son Binh, the Singing festival in Ha Bac, the Long Tong festival in Viet Bac, and numberless village festivals throughout the country.

Once a marriage was envisaged, a number of steps had to be taken, the initiative resting, of course, with the young man's family.

Preliminary Contact

The ritual was designated by various names: *cham ngo* (contact with the house), *dam mat* (getting to know the features), or *van danh* (asking the name). This first visit was the occasion for the young man's family to formally ask for the indispensable information: the girl's name, date of birth... The date of birth provided essential data for plotting her horoscope, comparing it with that of the young man, and making sure that they were "compatible"[1]. If they were not, this put an end to the marriage plan, whatever the other elements. On the other hand, if the two horoscopes tallied beautifully, a happy marriage was considered a foregone conclusion.

At present the *cham ngo* ritual is still observed by many families, but is simply regarded as a preliminary official step which will provide the two families and the two young people with proper occasions to meet and get to know each other in more detail.

Formerly in some areas, there might be a period of "probation" for the future bridegroom. After the *cham ngo* ceremony, he might be asked to come and live with the young woman's family for a period varying from a few months to a few years, during which he would behave as if he were one of its members, doing work in the fields and the like. If the girl was an only child, he might be asked after marriage to stay for good. He would then inherit the family's property and ensure the cult of its ancestors.

Betrothal

On a propitious day, often chosen with the help of the almanac, the young man's family would bring a number of gifts to the other family: areca nuts, betel leaves, tea, and maybe some wine and pastry. These were put in lacquered boxes ornamented with complicated designs and a family delegation would take them to destination. The gifts were divided by the girl's family into small portions which were offered to relatives and friends to announce the good news. A part of the gifts was traditionally returned to the sender (a gesture called *lai qua*, return of the box), the implication being that formal ties had been established.

From that day onward, the two families would discuss concrete arrangements for the marriage. For

instance, the girl's family would lay down its material requirements: money, jewels, rice, meat, etc. In the old days, a very evocative phrase was used for these demands: they were said to constitute a *thach cuoi* (wedding challenge), and could be quite a burden to carry. The future bridegroom might be compelled, to satisfy them, to contract debts that it might take years for the young couple, once married, to pay off. This unfortunate custom has now practically fallen into oblivion. At most, the bridegroom's family will contribute in some measure to the costs of the bride's trousseau and the banquet organized by her family on, or at the approach of, the wedding day.

The interval between betrothal and wedding could be a matter of weeks or years. During it, the young man's family will send gifts to the future bride's on the occasion of traditional festivals, the New Year in particular. If a death should occur in either family, a period of mourning is observed and the wedding has to be postponed until it is over. Or the wedding is organized in haste before the official announcement is made of the death. (this is called *wedding ahead of mourning).*

The Wedding

This is the most important ritual in marriage. It may be held on the same day as civil marriage (registration with the authorities) or on any other date, to be agreed upon by the two families.

In the old days, the ceremony involved complicated and sometimes costly steps: homage to the ancestors, homage to the God of Marriage, prostrating before the parents, "sharing a cup of wine" on wedding night, visit by the young couple to the bride's family on the day following marriage... At present, the rituals have been greatly simplified and those with a superstitious overtone are usually passed by.

In Vietnam weddings are held mostly in autumn and winter, especially at the approach of the Lunar New Year, Tet. On the day and at the hour agreed upon, a delegation from the young man's family comes to fetch the bride. It is headed by a *chu hon* (master of ceremonies) chosen among relatives or friends. In the towns and cities, the bridegroom carries with him a magnificent bouquet of flowers, usually gladioli or roses, or any other flowers which have the preference of the bride. At the gate of the bride's home, the delegation sets off a string of firecrackers to announce its arrival, whereupon another string of firecrackers is set off by the bride's family to welcome it. In Vietnam, firecrackers are exploded on happy occasions.

The two families then sit at tables laid out with cups of tea, cigarettes, pastry... After a moment, a representative of the bridegroom's family rises and makes a little speech, the gist of which is to "ask for the bride", i.e. to ask for permission to take her home to her fiancé. Then, the bridegroom, accompanied by his groomsmen, goes into the bride's chamber where she is waiting for him, assisted by the bridesmaids. He presents her with the bouquet, and both go out into the reception room to be presented to the participants to the ceremony: relatives, friends, neighbours... The master of ceremonies formally announces their union and they begin walking about the room exchanging greetings with, and receiving congratulations from, well-wishers.

At the approach of the day of wedding, either family or both may organize a banquet. Those who attend bring gifts in cash or in kind, according to a long-standing custom. In the countryside in particular, this is a form of mutual aid.

Among the Khua, an ethnic minority living in Tuyen Hoa district, Quang Binh province, there is the custom of the "double marriage". First, the bridegroom, accompanied by friends, comes by night to "abduct" the bride, with her consent and that of her family, of course. The following morning, the young man's family sends a delegation to the bride's to formally ask for her hand, bringing with them gifts which must include a sword and a string of beads. The delegation is warmly welcomed and the young couple stay with the bride's family for three days. This is called the first wedding. The second one, called the "major wedding", is celebrated some time later, in some cases several years later, after the young couple has had time to gain some measure of prosperity.

In the old days, in some areas of Vietnam, certain weddings took place at a special moment of the year: *giao thua*, the moment of passage to the New Year. They were celebrated by impecunious couples, who were exempted by custom from observance of complicated and costly rituals required under the feudal regime. ●

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1. Thus, people born in the years of the Monkey, Tiger, Snake, and Pig are not likely to make good matches for each other, according to the rules of "compatibility".

TRADITIONAL TOYS IN VIETNAM

A lantern procession.

Photo: THU HOAI

The art of toy-making has a long history in Vietnam. In the 17th century in particular, when urban centres began to take shape, favourable conditions were created for its development. Each year, at the approach of the Mid-Autumn Festival, the *Hang Ma* (Makers of Paper Objects) quarter in Hanoi and toy-makers in Bac Ninh, Ha Nam and other provinces produced large quantities of toys for sale.

Paper toys are typical of the toys seen on the occasion of the Mid-Autumn Festival, especially lanterns of various shapes (star, fish, human figures...). A plaited-bamboo frame or skeleton is made and pasted over with transparent paper decorated with tinsel. A candle would be lit and put inside the lantern. Lantern-holding children would walk in merry processions amidst drumbeats. They also show off other paper toys made in an infinite variety of shapes: elephant, horse, unicorn, lion, dragon, shrimp, fish, butterfly, flower, house, pagoda, etc. The display of lanterns is followed by lion dances and dragon dances often staged by grown-ups.

A shadow-play lantern is round or hexagonal in shape and comprises two concentric circular parts: the inner one is a bamboo ring bristling with paper-cuts in the form of soldiers, or fish and other animals; the outer one is a circular screen moved by a paper wheel turned by hot air rising from a burning candle placed in the middle. Looking at the screen, the children will see soldiers or animals pursuing each other in an endless chase. In Bac Ninh, horse figures are very often displayed in this kind of lantern.

Paper "doctors of literature" — laureates of ancient Court examinations — used to be sold to encourage children to study hard and succeed at school. The paper-made scholar figures wore ceremonial robes and hats with banners, parasols and other trappings in the background.

In the old days, those toys created an atmosphere of joy and emulation to win honours and riches through hard work. They were made of paper in the five primary colours (red, yellow, blue, black, and white).

Masks made of paper or cardboard are very popular with children. They may represent the stylized features of historical personalities or legendary figures and suggest various characters and temperaments: kindness, wickedness, loyalty... They may also simulate animal heads. In a very popular game, dancers wear "pig" masks.

To he are edible toys made of glutinous rice flour and *mach nha* (sugar made from rice sprouts). Itinerant vendors make them on the spot by sticking a tiny ball of paste at the end of a bamboo pipe and blowing it into the desired forms (pig, peacock, hen, duck, bird). Then the figurines are decorated with non-toxic pigments of many hues. Other *to he* are not edible. In this case, rice-based sweetmeats are sold with then.

The itinerant *to he* vendors have somehow disappeared from Hanoi streets, but I remember seeing one only a few years ago. He told me that *to he* originated in Thuong Tin district (Ha Son Binh province), but truly skilful *to he* makers were all dead long ago. Let us imagine how they ran their trade in their time: one would lay his small box on the ground and sit down at a street corner, sur-

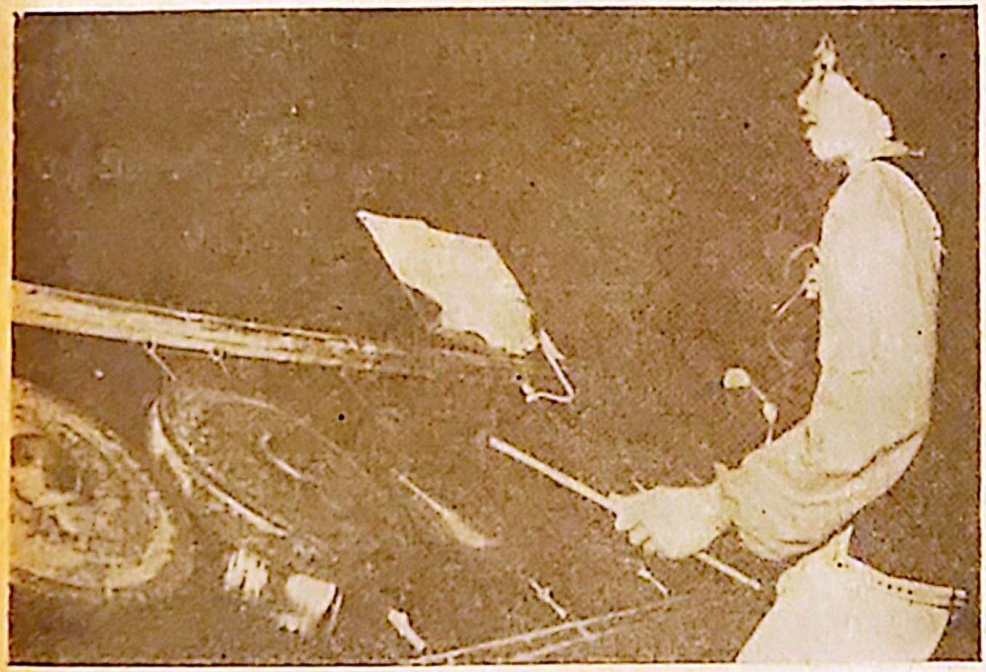
(Continued on page 24)

GONG PLAYING IN VIETNAM

According to many musicologists the gong seems to be played only in tropical countries. Sets of gongs are played only in Asia, particularly Southeast Asia.

In Vietnam, gongs are played mostly in the Central part of the country. In the North, the Muong, Thai, Po Then, Dao and Cham play gong music, while in the Central Highlands all the minority people do it. Worthy of note is this fact: of the nine circular friezes decorating the head of a Dong Son bronze drum, the fourth contains a set of seven gongs divided into two groups. They hang on both sides of a curved support in the middle of which is a man standing with his feet joined together and stretching his arms to strike two gongs hanging on either side of him. Thus, we may surmise that this percussion instrument made its appearance at about the same time as the bronze drum, or about 2,500 years ago.

It is not easy to make an instrument with a good tonal quality. A special bronze alloy is used. A valuable heirloom would have the knob at its centre made of a gold or silver alloy. Such a gong would be worth 40 buffaloes or a tamed elephant. Generally speaking, a gong's diametre ranges from 0.4 to 0.6 metre. It is called gong 1, gong 2, gong 3... gong 6, gong 7 according to its tone. At present, there are about 10 kinds of gongs.



Gong-player Pham Minh Dinh of the Dam San *Song and Dance Ensemble.*

Photo: TRAN AM

Gongs are played on the occasion of ceremonies and festivals: the Lunar New Year, inauguration of a new house, praying for rain, preparing a burnt-out clearing for crops, sacrifice of a buffalo, wedding, funeral, child-birth, etc.

Each ethnic minority has its particular set of gongs and method of playing them. The Bahnar play a set of 13 gongs, the Ede, one of nine. The Mnong and Ma sets comprise six gongs. Among some minorities several sets of gongs are in use, each for a determined occasion. Thus the Gia Rai choose from five sets of gongs, the Gie-Trieng, three. In the Central Highlands most of the gongs accord with the pentatonic scale with semi-tones, while the gongs of the Mnong and the Cham also follow that scale but without any semi-tone.

Ede gong-players sit on a Kban bench a dozen metres long made of a solid piece of timber and placed in a "long house". A small gong is placed aslant in the lap of each musician, while big gongs are either hung or laid flat on the ground and struck with a wooden stick. A similar way of playing gongs is observed among almost all the other minorities: the musician holds the gong in his left hand and strikes it either with a stick (whose end is wrapped in several layers of cloth) held in his right hand, or simply with the soft side of his fist. Sometimes the gong is used to beat time for a

dance : two steps forward followed by one step backward and a pause. The dancers move counter-clockwise and are often heartily joined by the spectators.

The gong is at the centre of many activities : dancing, singing, marionette shows, and games. Gong masquerades are popular in the Central Highlands. Clad in loincloths, their faces daubed with mud, gong players draw strange sounds from their instruments and make ludicrous movements, imitating monkeys or bears to bring forth laughter.

In March 1985, the Institute of Music and Dance under the Ministry of Culture organized in Gia Lai — Kon Tum a gong festival and symposium to study gong music in the South. A similar festival and symposium was held in Thanh Hoa for the North, attended by ten groups comprising about 100 gong players of the Thai, Tho, and Muong minorities from Hanoi, Ha Son Binh, Nghe Tinh and Thanh Hoa provinces. At the festival, traditional gong music of the North was presented together with some newly-composed pieces from Nghe Tinh and Thanh Hoa. At the symposium 20 papers were read and spirited discussions were held on such questions as whether or not it is necessary to modify the traditional composition of gong sets, the future development of gong music, etc.

In January 1988, there will be organized a national gong festival and symposium to pave the way for a "Southeast Asian Gong Festival" by the end of the year.

TUONG HIEN

TRADITIONAL...

(Continued from page 22)

rounded by children. His box contains small balls of glutinous rice flour and pigments of many colours : red, yellow, blue, black, white, brown, pink, as well as tiny carving tools. Blowing into the pipe and kneading the ball of paste, he would make for instance a warrior of the Three-Kingdoms period in China, complete with red face and blue armour, stroking his black beard with one hand and holding a sword in the other, with two small pennants emerging from behind his back, one yellow, the other blue. One minute later he would produce another warrior, also with a red face but clad in a white armour and flaunting red pennants ; or perhaps with a blue face, a black armour, and white pennants. The bright colours are sharply contrasting. Such details as eye, beard, belt, are meticulously done. The children are thus able to follow the "birth" of their favourite heroes.

Many kinds of ancient toys have fallen into oblivion. Plastic toys have now replaced paper toys and *to he*. Each kind of toys is bound up with a period and a generation of children. Toys don't negate their predecessors ; nor are they negated by their successors. However, let us note that plastic toys are mass produced and are not linked to any particular custom or game. Some paper toys have remained in existence. Every year, at the approach of the Mid-Autumn Festival, *Hang Ma* Street in Hanoi is thronged with children and their parents coming to buy toys. The makers of *to he* are no longer seen, but in Hanoi a small number of itinerant toy vendors are still in business. To me, however, the paste figurines (cock, horse, flower...) they make are inferior in dexterity and seem somehow soulless. But they continue to attract crowds of children.

PHAN CAM THUONG

Lion dance.

Photo : TRINH LIEM

Guitar Performer Ta Tan

Ta Tan has done a great deal to popularize guitar music in Vietnam. Besides, he was one of the first to teach the guitar at the Music School, and has been a famed soloist. Now aged 62, he still plays with gusto. On the 30th founding anniversary of the Hanoi Conservatoire last year, he held a recital which captivated his audience because it radiated love of life.

His father was a music lover and played some traditional instruments. Ta Tan evinced a gift for music at an early age. His favourite instrument was the guitar. When 15 — 16 years old, he took lessons from two excellent guitarists: one a Japanese and the other a Filipino. Soon, he performed on his own in public and won well-deserved praise. But his fame truly began with the return of peace in North Vietnam in 1954, particularly after he became a teacher at the Vietnam Music School (now the Hanoi Conservatoire). In musical soirées organized by the Musicians' Association or the Vietnam Music School his guitar solos were always warmly applauded.

To guitar music Ta Tan's contributions have been many-sided: as a performer, a composer, and a teacher. He has introduced Vietnamese audiences to world-famous compositions. He has been credited with bringing Vietnamese folk-songs into guitar music. The pieces he has transposed for the guitar have elicited warm responses from his audiences: folksongs such as *Xe chi luon kim* (Threading a Needle), *Trong com* (Drum), *Ly cay da* (The Banyan), *Xam xoan* (The Blind Minstrel), *Luu Thuy* (Running Water)... and many newly-composed songs. His tonal arrangement is perfect, resulting in balance, suave harmony, and ensuring the unity and logical development of such songs as *Bai Ca Hy Vong* (The Song of Hope), *Nhung anh sao dem* (Night Stars), *Cau ho ben ben Hien Luong* (The Song at the Hien Luong Ferry), *Quang Binh que ta oi* (Quang Binh, My Native Land), *Qua song* (River Crossing). In one of his most renowned compositions — Spanish Dance — Ta Tan's talent as a guitar composer is at its best: beautiful harmony and rhythm. His own performance of it is beyond all praise. Fifteen collections of songs — each comprising five or six pieces — arranged by Ta Tan for the guitar have been published by the Culture Publishing House.

Ta Tan has trained many generations of guitarists, among them Dang Ngoc Long, Nguyen Van Di, Vu Dinh Tan and others, young artists with a promising future. Having joined the Vietnam Music School at its very beginnings, Ta Tan has played a major role in the guitar and the accordion sections. He has published two manuals for the guitar in which two different methods are taught. He is now writing a third one for students up to the college level.

Ta Tan's talents have also been appreciated abroad. In 1978, he performed at the World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana (Cuba) and was awarded diplomas of merit by the organizing committee. On that occasion, he composed a piece named *chat mia* (Cutting Sugarcane) which received warm praise.

I asked him what interests him most at present. He said:

"At 62, I am ready to yield the palm to younger performers. I am very fond of composing and I will do my best for the guitar. So far I have mostly arranged folk songs and popular songs, but now I will concentrate on doing things off my own bat."

"Please let me hear some of your own works," I pleaded.

Ta Tan took his guitar and played for me two pieces: *Chat mia* (Cutting Sugarcane) and *Nhac chieu* (Evening Song).

"You are still full of energy. Why don't you write something for the young — about love for instance?"

"Of course, I have done it. Listen!"

He then played *Tieng sao tinh yeu* (The Flute of Love), a dreamy, very original melody which testifies to a sensitive soul and a youthful spirit.

KIEU THAM

FRAGRANT ISLAND

At Khu Tuong — a pepper plantation in Phu Quoc, Vietnam's southernmost offshore island — pepper is put out to dry in the sun in front of every house. The smell of the spice pervades the whole area.

In a garden I saw girls merrily picking pepper and asked to have a try. I mounted a step-ladder. Pepper harvesting is a simple job which is rather well remunerated: 200 *dong* and 3 meals a day

Pepper-growing ranks second after fishing in the islanders' occupations.

This spice is sold in various forms: grain, powder, or oil in increasing quantity to foreign countries. Before the August Revolution in 1945 between 450 and 600 tonnes were exported annually.

Owing to its export value, pepper has been planted on an extensive scale from Binh Tri Thien through the Central Highlands to Nam Bo. At present, it is the perennial industrial crop which gives the highest returns, more than coffee even.

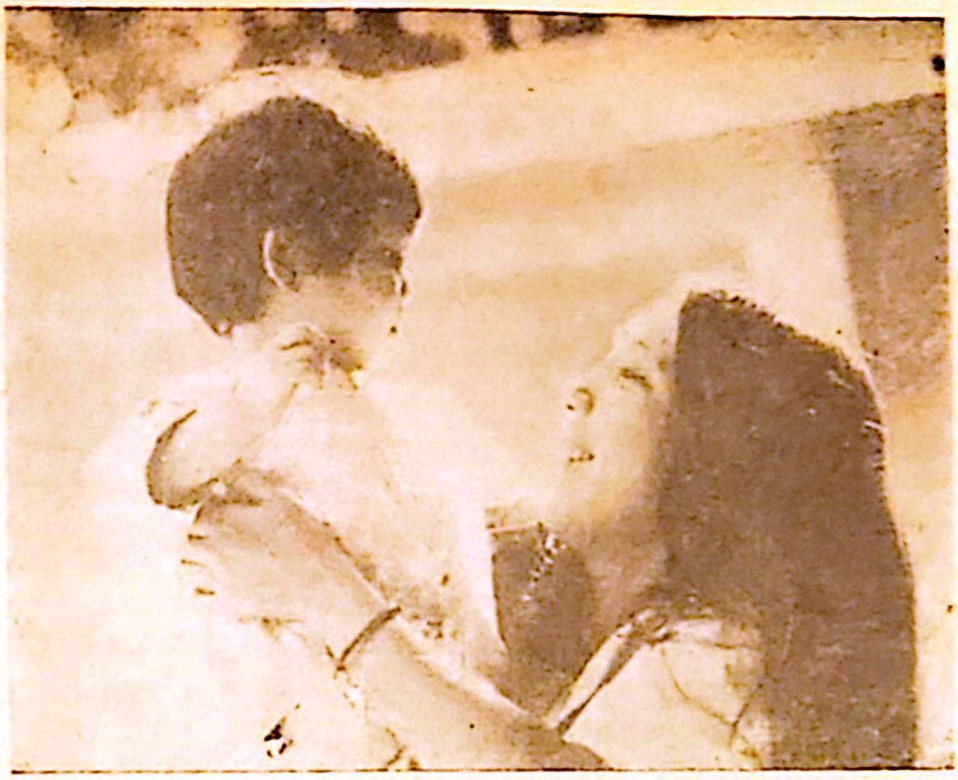
According to a survey conducted in 1985 and yielding only incomplete data, pepper is grown in the

(Continued on page 31)

Pepper picking.

Photo: VNA

SOME PROBLEMS IN PRESENT-DAY FAMILY LIFE



The joy of motherhood. Photo: THANH HAI

Together with changes in the socio-economic fabric, family life in Vietnam has undergone fundamental modifications: gradual increase of the role of women in family activities; larger share taken by men in daily chores; tendency to reduce the number of children; generally speaking, a process of liberation of women in all fields.

We publish below a survey carried in the May 12, 1987 issue of the weekly Phu Nu Viet Nam *(Vietnamese Women)* — Editor.

I. CHANGES IN FAMILY LIFE

1. Democratization

Recent sociological investigations have shown that even in the countryside where tradition is supposed to prevail, a process of democratization has taken place in family relations. Women's rights are enhanced as well as their share in the taking of decisions affecting family life. Besides holding the purse strings, they often decide, on their own or together with their husbands, major questions such as purchase of valuables, division of tasks, marriage of the children, choice of careers for them (See table).

Role of husband and wife in the solution of family problems (%)

Problems	Decided mainly by the wife	Decided mainly by the husband	Decided by both husband and wife
Purchase of food	70.3	6.8	18.3
Purchase of clothing	57.6	12.3	27.1
Purchase of cultural articles	46.1	30.3	18.9
Purchase of valuables	28	34.8	31.3
Division of tasks	26.8	36.6	30.5
Choice of plants and animals raised	23.3	25.2	32.4
Marrying the children	10.6	7.8	27.3
Choice of a trade or profession for children	9.1	10.6	33.6

Note: Other family members such as grand-parents, the older children, and other persons may also take part in such decisions.

The democratization of matrimonial relations is the most visible in young families, urban families, and among educated people.

2. Men are taking a bigger share of household chores as women participate more and more in social affairs. In the cities this share may amount to as much as 28%. It increases with the educational standards of the couple: 31.4% on an average in families of intellectuals; 27.5% in families of civil servants; and 25.2% in workers' families.

3. The number of children drops in varying degrees according to social stratum. This reduction is prompted by the women's desire to have more time for social or occupational activities. In our country, the policy of encouragement to birth control, the raising of cultural standards, and economic difficulties have contributed to this reduction. To have two children at most is a generally accepted idea, particularly among young couples. In urban centres, 76.4% of the families surveyed want to have two children at most while only 2.1% would like to have four, and 20%, three children. A peasant family would agree to have two children only if at least one is a boy. The average number of child-

(Continued on page 29)

Book Review

ANATOMY OF A WAR, BY GABRIEL KOLKO

The American imperialists' war of aggression against Vietnam ended more than ten years ago. But the eddies it created in the United States have not disappeared. The debate is still going on, at times erupting into acrimonious argument.

Many questions have been raised. They are fairly similar when posed by different circles: scholars, military men, diplomats, members of the press... Why, after witnessing the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, should the United States have rushed headlong into this military adventure, only to suffer an even more bitter defeat? And why this defeat, in spite of the fact that the Americans in a relatively small theatre of operations, South Vietnam, fielded an immense army, half a million men at the climax of the war, and used a colossal amount of ordnance, three times the tonnage of bombs and shells dropped by the Allied forces on all theatres of operations during the Second World War? Why did the Vietnam War provoke such a serious and deep-going crisis — social, political, psychological — in the United States? Whereas the United States had got out of the two world wars, especially the second one, with its economic and military power increased several-fold, why should its strength have dwindled in many fields, at home and abroad, in the post-Vietnam era? Why should Vietnam, a small country with a backward economy, have got the better of a major imperialist power, with economic and military resources dozens of times larger than its own? What are the lessons to be drawn from that defeated aggression?

The questions may look similar, but the answers to them differ widely.

It must be said right away that a number of monopoly capitalists have not swallowed that defeat. Their views are shared by their political and military confederates, whom they employ in the realization of their dreams of conquest and in the service of their selfish interests. After keeping a low profile for a certain time after 1975 in the face of popular denunciation and condemnation by progressive opinion in the United States and in the world, American extreme rightwing forces started a programme of action aimed at fanning up chauvinistic feelings in the army and a section of American society. They distorted facts and tried to defend by means of sophistries the erroneous policies of American administrations involved in the war. Their designs were clear: to re-write history and make preparations for new adventures, new aggressions in the world. Here are some of their mendacious affirmations: in Vietnam the American expeditionary army lost strategically but won tactically; it did not lose the war on the battlefield but at home, because of the anti-war movement; if the Americans had persisted in their war effort, they might have won it, and so on, and so forth.

Many scholars and academics have actively fought those sophistries and sought to enlighten public opinion by supplying hard facts and cogent analyses. Gabriel Kolko is one of them. His book is truly about the "anatomy" of a war, the Vietnam war.

He worked on his book from 1964 to 1985. From an objective standpoint based on facts and documents, he scrutinized elements of the situation in Vietnam, in the United States, and in the world generally. Here is his conclusion: For the United States the Vietnam war was the climax of fruitless efforts in the post-World War Two period aimed at combining military and political means in an attempt to reverse a situation in which newly-emerging nations and social regimes opposed an international order the United States was seeking to establish in the world.

Of course no study or research can be perfect. They may contain weaknesses, or fail to meet the requirements of various reader circles. Nonetheless, this is a comprehensive study, a deep-going analysis, indeed one of the most valuable research works done so far in the United States about the Vietnam war.

Gabriel Kolko examines the strategic ambitions of the American ruling circles since the end of World War Two and their mistaken calculations. He delves into the reasons which prevented the most sophisticated American weapons at the time, including the B.52 super-bombers, once the pride of the US Air Force, from being fully effective and bringing the desired effects. He follows the extremely dangerous escalation of the American war maniacs, including their expansion of the US air war to the North, and points to the reasons which compelled Washington to de-escalate, sit at the negotiating table, sign the Paris Agreement, and finally withdraw US troops from Vietnam.

A penetrating analysis is made of American economic, social, political and military factors. The puppet army and administration in wartime American-occupied south Vietnam were composed of incompetent and impotent elements with no popular support and devoid of all ideals. They only sponged on the Americans, depending on them for support and profit. That is why as soon as they lost this support, their regime quickly collapsed. Concerning the Vietnamese side, the author made a profound study of the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam and President Ho Chi Minh (strategy, tactics, organization of the masses, organization of the war economy, international solidarity, etc.), the Vietnamese people's intelligence and resourcefulness, their long traditions and their yearning for independence and freedom.

Such a book could not fail to provoke hostile response from reactionary and warlike circles in the United States. The attack made by Doan Van Toai on Gabriel Kolko, printed in the *Washington Post* of 2 March 1987, surprised no one. After all Doan Van Toai knows where he gets his bread and butter.

PHAM BINH

SOME PROBLEMS....

(Continued from page 27)

ren differs substantially according to social or professional groups and the educational standards of the couples. Families of intellectuals have the lowest average number of children: 1.69. The figure for workers' families is two children and for families of self-employed people 3.95 children. Couples with only a primary education show the largest average: 4.66 children.

II. SOME OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS

1. Instability of Marriage

It is shown in the increase in the number of divorces (80% of divorces happen among young couples with only from one month to five years of married life) and in conflicts between husbands and wives. Those divorces are connected with: (1) emancipation of women from feudal morals; (2) difficulties arising from the emergence of equality between husband and wife. Nearly 50% of divorces are caused by "temperamental disharmony". This is evidence that the stability of the family depends more and more on psychological and sentimental factors, on concord between husband and wife, on the maintenance of love after marriage. Today, the settlement of family quarrels is not only the business of husband and wife but calls for the intervention of society, beginning with the inculcation in the minds of the young generation of the right actions on love, marriage and the family.

2. Contradictions Between the Social Activism of Women and Their Role as Wives and Mothers

However great the part taken by a man in family affairs, he can never replace his wife in one key area: giving birth to children. Here there is no equality between man and woman. That is why the liberation of women is not simply a matter of enhancing their role in social production. It calls for the solution of a series of social problems in order to guarantee for them the necessary conditions for both practising a trade or profession and fulfilling their sacred duties in the family.

3. The Break in the Education of Children

Willy-nilly we are facing the disintegration of the old family and old-type family relations.

This is complicated by the fact that the liquidation of the obsolete principles of the old family is taking place at a faster rate than the formation and consolidation of the new family. Hence the break in the continuity of family life, including the education of children. The relaxation of family ties, the separation from grand-parents, the impossibility for fathers and mothers to ensure continuous supervision of the conduct of their children and the latter's constant contact with their friends and with the mass media, are major problems in the education of children. In the present transition toward a new-type family, one must stress the relations between family, society and school in the education of children, and to turn to account positive factors in traditional education. Difficult living conditions are reducing the returns of the normal labour of family members. At present, the income derived from wages and from products distributed by cooperatives can only meet a small part of family needs. The extra work that has to be done to augment family incomes has a bad effect. People have less time for rest, recreation, and cannot adequately replenish their strength and improve their education. Housing shortage is also a major problem for Vietnamese families at present. ●

EDUCATION GETS FIRST PRIORITY

On 24 September 1987, nearly 2 million Kampuchean children all over the country began their new school year, the ninth since the country's liberation from the Pol Pot clique's genocidal regime.

Since then, hundreds of school buildings have been erected in Phnom Penh, Kompong Som, Kandal, Kompong Cham, Svay Rieng, Stung Treng, Mondulkiri, Siem Reap, Oddar Meanchay and Battambang provinces. By 1985, the Kampuchean Education Publishing House had printed nearly two million copies of textbooks for general-education schools and infant classes. In preparation for the present ninth school year, with the assistance of the Educational Services of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, it has printed 109,500 more copies.

At the eighth national conference on education, which reviewed the work done in 1986 - 1987, the Kampuchean Ministry of Education assessed the results achieved in the eight years of restoration and development of education under the new regime and discussed concrete measures to implement the line and policies charted by the Fifth Congress of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party.

In the four years it ruled over Kampuchea (April 1975 — January 1979), the Pol Pot clique sought to "reform" by destroying schools and massacring teachers or sending them to do forced labour in "people's communes". It destroyed all the schools, libraries and laboratories built by the people over a period of decades.

A savage carnage unknown in the history of Kampuchea was conducted by Pol Pot agents: 75% of teachers, 96% of college students and 67% of general-school children were killed. The teachers who survived that genocide had their health badly affected. At a press conference held on the occasion of the first school year, Pen Navut, Minister of Education of the new regime, declared to Kampuchean and foreign journalists: "We have to start from scratch in the restoration and building of our education. We are facing countless difficulties."

After the liquidation of the genocidal regime and the elimination of the threat of famine, the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party and State set about fighting illiteracy. After eight years of restoration of education, in the present 1987 - 1988 school year,

Extracurricular activities of Phnom Penh students.
Photo: VU HUYEN

1,955,150 children are attending general education (1,393,600 children in the first level; 460,000 in the second; and 36,500 in the third). In 1970, the peak year of Kampuchean education before liberation, there were only 959,123 pupils and about 20,000 teachers. Under the new regime, higher education and vocational education have also been developed. Teachers' training schools number 28. The Phnom Penh Teachers' College, the largest establishment of this kind, reopened on 14 May 1980, only a little over one year after the liberation of the country. Its nine departments admit 800 students each year. In six years, it trained 671 teachers (four batches). Recently 248 more students were graduated (fifth batch). The college also runs crash courses. Besides, there are seven teachers' schools in Phnom Penh, Kandal, Takeo, Prey Veng, Kompong Cham, Battambang and Stung Treng. The Stung Treng school trains teachers for the northeastern highlands. There are also twenty teachers' schools in the provinces.

Under the new regime, infant education was organized right in the first year after liberation with nearly 10,000 children admitted to infant classes. Now there are 60,000 children and 2,700 teachers in kindergartens. The liquidation of illiteracy is proceeding apace. While in 1979, 1,205,800 adults aged between 18 and 45 could neither read nor write, by August 1987, 945,280 of them have been freed from illiteracy. In 15 ministries and departments, 8 provinces and municipalities, 106 districts and 1,174 communes, illiteracy has been totally wiped out.

NGUYEN THE NGHIEP

FRAGRANT...

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country in 15 areas comprising each upward of 20,000 — 30,000 props (a post to support the plants) adding up to about 2.3 million props, of which there are in Phu Quoc nearly 800,000.

Pepper planting on this island is done on a larger scale than anywhere else in Vietnam.

On an average, each family tends 1,000 props (5,000 — 6,000 for the richer ones; 300 — 500 being the minimum).

The soil here is most suited for pepper: sandy clay, porous and friable. Phu Quoc pepper is renowned on both the domestic and foreign markets.

The soil is fertilised with manure prepared from fish, shrimp and especially ox droppings. The island's statistics comprise one interesting entry: the number of oxen reared for every hectare under pepper. It shows off the growth of the ox herd which has trebled in five years while the number of props only doubled. Shrimp and ox wastes are used in soil preparation and more shrimp waste is added when seeds are produced.

Great attention has been paid to selecting seeds so much so that seeds from Phu Quoc are much sought after throughout the country.

Acting upon a resolution of the district Party committee, the island is striving to have 1,000 hectares under pepper by 1990. To this end, 80 more hectares are to be planted this year. The problem is to get 200,000 props for them. The reserves of timber used for the posts (hard wood growing in the island's forests) have dwindled.

So, the islanders have been using either brick or cement posts or *vong* plants whose roots bear nodules which supply nutrients to the soil. One-third of the required 200,000 props will be made of bricks. This calls for 2 million bricks and 600 tonnes of cement to be supplied by the trading service.

Phu Quoc lacks manpower. Each hectare requires the care of six persons. The 1,000 hectares to be planted by 1990 calls for 3,000 more workers.

Then more capital must be found if production is to be enlarged because pepper growing requires relatively important initial investments and State loans are insufficient. More gasoline and oil for pesticide-sprayers and irrigation pumps have also to be got from the State.

Pepper growing is the main topic of discussion among both the farmers and the authorities, who are planning to make Phu Quoc into a major pepper exporter.

As our plane crossed the width of the island we could see straight rows of pepper plants tracing beautiful designs against the blue background of the sea.

HUU TAM

CHRONOLOGY • CHRONOLOGY

(15 Oct. — 14 Nov.)

OCTOBER

15. *Hanoi:* The State Council of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam confers the Ho Chi Minh Order on the Central Committee of the Vietnam Writers' and Artists' Union on its 40th founding anniversary and Independence Orders, First Class, on the Writers' Association, the Plastic Arts Association, the Musicians' Association, and the Stage Artists' Association on their 30th founding anniversaries.

+ A Soviet Government delegation led by L.A. Voronin, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Chairman of the Soviet State Committee for Material and Technical Supply ends its visit to Vietnam.

16. *Vientiane:* Signing of a protocol delimiting Lao — Vietnamese boundaries on frontier rivers and streams.

19 — 20. *Hanoi:* Vietnam and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) hold a conference on bilateral cooperation for 1988-91 in health care, education, mother and child welfare, water supply, and environmental hygiene.

20 — 25. *Quang Nam — Da Nang:* Participating in the 1987 national swimming championships are swimmers from 20 provinces and cities. Eight new national records are set.

The Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and Binh Tri Thien teams win the greatest numbers of medals.

20 — 29. A delegation of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany Central Control Commission, led by its Vice-Chairman Werner Muller, member of the Central Committee, pays a visit to Vietnam.

21. *Phnom Penh:* Signing of a protocol on Kampuchea — Vietnam cooperation in education for 1987.

23 — 25. *Hanoi:* Participating in the 1987 national athletic championships are 180 athletes in 10 teams. Three national records in the women's shot put, 100m-sprint and long jump are set. The Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and Phu Khanh teams win the largest numbers of medals.

25 — 29. A Soviet Government delegation led by V.S. Gusev, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Vice-Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers pays a visit to Vietnam. On this occasion, many documents on Vietnamese-Soviet cooperation are signed.

28 — 29. *Hanoi:* Holding of the Second Congress of the Vietnam Buddhist Church (see Panorama, page 3)

28 Oct. — 1 Nov. A Vietnamese Government delegation led by Nguyen Canh Dinh, Minister of Water Conservancy and President of the Vietnam Sub-Committee in the Vietnam-Iraq Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation, visits Iraq.

28 Oct. — 5 Nov. A delegation of the Czechoslovak People's Control Commission led by Frantisek Ondrich, Cabinet Minister and President of the Commission, visits Vietnam.

29. *Hanoi:* Opening of the USSR National Exhibition.

31 Oct. — 8 Nov. A Vietnamese cultural delegation led by Tran Van Phac, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam and Minister of Culture, visits Indonesia.

31 Oct. — 10 Nov. A Vietnamese Party and Government delegation led by Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, attends in Moscow the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution.

31. A Vietnamese water-puppet troupe ends its visit and performances in Paris, begun on 10 October.

NOVEMBER

2 — 3. *Hanoi:* Meeting in a regular session, the SRV State Council approves a decree on the people's security forces and discusses a draft law on foreign investments.

4. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam confers the Gold Star Order on Sanjo Nosaka, Honorary Chairman of the Japanese Communist Party Central Committee, for his outstanding contributions to building and promoting solidarity, friendship and cooperation between the Communist Parties and peoples of Vietnam and Japan.

6. *Hanoi:* Holding of a grand meeting to mark the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

+ *Hanoi:* Inauguration of a testing centre at the Saint Paul Hospital in Hanoi after 10 months of construction. The centre, built with the assistance of the *Secours Populaire Français* (SPF), is equipped with modern apparatuses.

7. After 11 months of construction at the Thai Nguyen Steel Complex a rotating furnace for the smelting of porous iron with a yearly capacity of 22,000 tons is commissioned.

9 — 11. *Hanoi:* Holding of the sixth session of the Vietnamese — French Inter-Governmental Commission for Cultural, Scientific and Technical Cooperation. A document on cultural, scientific and technical cooperation for 1988-89 is signed.

10 — 17. A delegation of the Communist Party of Argentina led by General Secretary Athos Fava pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

13. *Hanoi:* Signing of a protocol on goods exchange and payment between Vietnam and Hungary in 1988.

14 — 19. A Vietnamese National Assembly delegation led by Le Quang Dao, member of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, President of the National Assembly, and Vice-President of the State Council pays an official friendship visit to Poland. ●

SOVIET EXHIBITION IN HANOI

(29 October – 17 November 1987)

- *Children's City.*

- *The Giang Vo Exhibition Centre in Hanoi where the exhibition was held.*

Photos: VU QUOC HUNG

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